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# Inspiring Leaders: Behaviours Build the Brand

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## Context & Approach

It is no surprise that when we think of inspiring leaders, we identify people we want to emulate, model ourselves after and have the opportunity to work with. As a colleague once observed, leadership can be summarized very succinctly: “Leaders inspire”.

And it is seldom because of ‘what’ they do, but rather ‘why’ they do it and ‘how’ they do it. A book by Simon Sinek entitled *Find Your Why* and an earlier TED talk by the author expand on this point.<sup>1</sup>

If one looks further into the part inspiration plays in effective leadership, a trusted source such as the Harvard Business Review (HBR) is a good place to begin. Over a few years, the HBR published three articles on the topic. It is clear that the topic of inspiration warrants serious examination as a major aspect of effective leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Four thoughts informed the writing of this article:

1. A belief that inspirational leadership was never more necessary than it is in these uncertain times;
2. A leader’s inspirational behaviours will be a mix of core aspects of character; inspiring actions are often situationally-driven, guided by genuine caring for others and directly related to the needs and expectations of teams, followers and the wider organization.
3. Moreover, effective leaders inspire through their significant ability to retain balance between and among the competing demands they face; and
4. While the best leaders are strongly inspirational, they too need support as they continue to lead in a way that invites engagement and commitment. Conversation is of course an important element in this regard, but pragmatic and focused action steps also play a prominent role.

As noted by Ian Cullwick, a retired partner with an international consulting firm: *“At a system-wide level, inspiration includes the need to demonstrate and deliver genuine and consistently-applied leadership and management practices; to accomplish this, an accountability framework and related delegated authorities are essential.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Sinek, S., D. Mead and P. Docker. (2017) *Find Your Why*. London: Penguin Books Limited; Sinek, S. (2010) TED Talk entitled How Great Leaders Inspire Action.

<sup>2</sup> See the following HBR articles: Kaufman, S. (2011, November 8th). Why Inspiration Matters; Zenger, J. and J. Folkman. (2013, June 20th). What Inspiring Leaders Do; and Garton, E. (2017, April 25th). How to be an Inspiring Leader.

Our discussion starts with some basic thinking about ‘inspiration’, informed in part by a current focused survey of a range of senior leaders, coaches, consultants and clients. In addition, I identify some shared behaviours which I have experienced directly from among those I work with. Along with the research findings, these become for our purposes a ‘baseline’ for the balance of the article.

From there, I highlight some of the challenges leaders face as they manage their own resilience and at the same time, remain supportive of colleagues. The ‘work’ of the leader – and the leader’s organization in supporting their leaders – as they remain strongly inspirational is discussed. Finally, I conclude the article with a few key practical action steps for leaders to consider as they continue to maintain a high degree of effectiveness which balances their own wellbeing with continuing inspiration, engagement and commitment of colleagues.

## What Do We Mean by “Inspirational” and What Do We Notice?

There are many definitions of what is evident when we refer to a leader as being ‘inspiring’. There is clearly a vitality suggested by the root of inspirational – ‘inspire’ as to breathe in – as there is also a sense of the ‘composite’. By that I mean that no single attribute or behaviour generally defines what it is to inspire. Courage may come close, as might attributes such as integrity, decisiveness, humility, mastery of subject matter and the ability to create a compelling vision. But generally, one can point to a number of behaviours which taken together constitute ‘inspiration’ for others. And the definition of what is inspiring is as it should be in the hands of those who are led. As well, the opportunity to provide feedback to the leader is a key component of ensuring that inspiration has the impact people expect.

My quick ‘pop-up’ research question generated some very interesting responses from a varied group of thoughtful, senior individuals; many of those to whom I looked to for input might be described as inspirational in their own right.

A single question was posed to the survey group: “When you think of a leader who is ‘inspiring’, what are the two behaviours or attributes of that individual that immediately come to mind?”

There was a very good response rate – over 60% – perhaps because of both the topic and the very focused request.

As a way to think about the research input, we can consider looking at responses falling roughly into three areas:

1. The characteristics, values, mindset and emotional intelligence of the leader; in other words, **behaviours** and qualities that define ‘presence’;

2. How leaders actually '**show up**' i.e. what do they say and do?; and
3. The **impact** of inspiring leaders on their teams, colleagues and the wider organization.

As to what leaders *carry with them by way of characteristics and values*, it is fair to say that many of the responses converge on the central fact that inspirational leaders are highly self-aware individuals. Their emotional intelligence is well-developed, with empathy, healthy self-regard and an ability to manage stress among key defining elements. Inspirational leaders are ethical, selfless, trustworthy and clear in their thinking and have an inner sense of integrity. On the thinking dimension, one participant expanded by saying that inspiring leaders have "exceptional critical thinking" in their makeup.

Of great interest is *how inspiring leaders actually 'show up'*, as perceived by colleagues. "Presence" is often cited as is an obvious 'can do' attitude. This latter descriptor emerges from the responses in wording such as "positivity", "optimism", "approachability", which can imply compassion for others and "passion" for what they believe and stand for.

They are able to articulate a "vision" and bring a "strategic" outlook to their leadership style. The manifestation of the earlier comments on self-awareness is revealed through "ideas that engage and motivate", high levels of "energy" and "enthusiasm", "bold and practical" approaches and 'grit' as it emerges in examples of "perseverance" and "determination". These behaviours are major contributors to what one might expect in a role model.

In 'showing up', those who inspire are also able to balance the above with always being viewed as "authentic", "humble" and "approachable". That balance is also revealed in an openness to "adapting" and "adjusting" in the face of new factors, of being "open to be influenced" and in essence "always looking for the better way". That is viewed as a facet of "courage", one of the principal aspects of being an inspiring individual. Finally, there is an obvious "demonstrated commitment to values and convictions". And quite often, the inspiring leader brings a "sense of humour" and knows when and how to apply it in positive ways.

When we look at *impact of inspiring leaders on their teams and colleagues*, a few insights comprised the major themes across the research findings. Inspiring leaders develop followers, often individuals who as a consequence of being inspired, go 'above and beyond' strict role descriptions. They deliver at a higher level by applying 'discretionary effort' to the challenges and tasks which are associated with building a desired future.

People gravitate to these leaders because they are superb communicators, very often enhanced by their abilities as "storytellers". Their clear thinking and masterful sense of how to create a future that people can see and choose to be part of was an important insight which several participants identified. In addition, inspiring leaders attract those who want to learn with and

from them. They value “interactions” with leaders and draw closer as they realize that leaders don’t pretend to have all the answers but are open to learning together and learning more quickly than might otherwise be possible.

If we were to sum up the impact in as concise a manner as possible, it is that inspiring leaders are the very definition of “role models” through their obvious behaviours and their core values.

One final thought as we conclude our look at the research findings: the high degree of agreement on what behaviours and attributes are most closely aligned with inspiring leadership suggests that all participants ‘know it when they see and hear it’.

From the research themes just discussed, I want to highlight one very important aspect for purposes of this paper: *there is an evident sense of balance in all that an inspiring leader does and says.* The most effective and inspiring leaders wisely commit to a ‘Both / And’ approach versus an ‘Either / Or’ stance.<sup>3</sup> To complement what the research has generated, I immediately think about my direct experience as a leadership coach and consultant to clients over the years. That experience converges on many dimensions with what participants have shared in their responses.

The points below are more numerous than might be the case under a different topic; I have deliberately made the list longer as both a reflection of the many facets to leading in an inspiring way as well as a prompt to readers to add their own experience:

- A commitment to a toughminded approach to outcomes and priorities along with a genuine and visible concern for relationships and the wellbeing of colleagues; leaders pay attention to both outcomes and processes;
- ‘Showing up’ fully, with all of the significant strengths the leader has in balance with the view that leadership is ‘shared’, solutions are co-created and that the leader is not ‘all-knowing’;
- Courage and decisiveness alongside openness, a listener’s mindset, humility and vulnerability;
- A strong commitment to learning and growth with no sense that what has to be learned (and ‘un-learned’) is solely the leader’s decision i.e. ‘what’ to learn and ‘how’ to learn (e.g. digital enablement)
- The ability to consider quantitative / hard data and qualitative or soft data, all in the service of generating good information from which to make decisions or to create solutions;

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<sup>3</sup> Arnold, T. (2022) Lead With And. An Amazon Publication. [This book is the single best work on a ‘Both / And’ mindset of which I am aware. I would recommend it for leaders seeking to inspire while balancing natural tensions].

- A ‘coaching mindset’ with a corresponding willingness to take informed but nonetheless toughminded decisions; inspiring leaders challenge respectfully and clearly in the service of clarity and better approaches;
- The ability to hold strategic objectives in mind at the same time as tactical and operational approaches are modified based on circumstance;
- A high degree of self-awareness, confidence and trust in self<sup>4</sup> but without any hint of arrogance or hubris and a tacit recognition that there may be ‘blind spots’ which impact the leader’s decisions; and
- An effective communicator and collaborator combined with an ability to establish and honour clear boundaries, including the will to stand firmly with a considered approach when required. Again, the larger objective is to balance individual with organization priorities.

So with the above as something of a ‘baseline’ to what comprises a wide-ranging – albeit incomplete – list of behaviours considered to be inspiring, let’s now look at what inspiring leaders have lived through these past couple of years.

## **What Have Inspirational Leaders Experienced Over the Last Two Years?**

The pandemic has changed our lives in countless ways, most importantly in the devastating impact on individuals and families. Losses are incalculable and will leave voids and sorrows for a lifetime. In the world of organizations and work, thoughtful overall strategies have been shattered, business models shaken if not broken and related HR and workforce strategies and tactics altered in ways we could not have predicted.

At times we seem to forget that leaders are not ‘super-human’ or immune to the challenges we have all lived through in the virtual world. Even the most inspiring of leaders have had to deal with expectations which have emerged or needs and wants that have become ‘even more vivid’<sup>5</sup> as a result of a virtual workplace.

Their own resilience and care for their overall wellbeing has often taken a ‘backseat’ to the wants and needs of those they lead. Leaders experience compromised health in both physical and mental dimensions along with diminished ‘reserves’ of energy and resilience. Courageous clients have shared their feelings of being exhausted and struggling to summon the necessary energy to support their colleagues and teams in ways that they want to.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, see Allen-Hardisty, L. (2021, August 18). Trust yourself first: Addressing DEI using emotional intelligence. Queen’s University IRC. <https://irc.queensu.ca/trust-yourself-first-addressing-dei-using-emotional-intelligence/>.

<sup>5</sup> Kingwell, M. (2020) On Risk. Windsor, Ontario: Biblioasis

Energy required to support self and others is not infinite and needs attention from time-to-time. Most thoughtful leaders do pay some level of attention to their own good health and wellbeing. This may take the form of a 'check-in' with self or taking a brief pause from the day-to-day demands and expectations inherent in their roles. Still, the pace of organization change can distract or lead to a focus on the most urgent and not necessarily the most important; in a real sense, care for self takes a backseat. And leaders, not only those in military and para-military settings, are to a great extent defined by their commitment to put the needs of others ahead of their own. "Know your people and look after their welfare" is one often-quoted principle.<sup>6</sup>

For leaders who recognize that they are able to bring their most effective gifts to inspire to their teams, colleagues and the wider organization, we think that there is work that is individual i.e. the leader's work alone, and then there is work which requires the participation and focused attention not only of the leader but also that of other parts of the organization. Each of these is discussed below with some practical suggestions in each instance which leaders might find useful as they continue to grow, learn and remain as inspirations to others.

## **The Individual Work of the Inspiring Leader**

Many leaders have recognized the importance of being as self-aware as possible in order to align intended with actual outcomes. Self-reflection, application of mindfulness principles and processes and feedback from trusted colleagues can be very helpful. These leaders readily admit that there are 'blind spots' which can impact their effectiveness and/or limit their ability to consistently inspire others.

As a leader, individual development and actions that build reserves of energy and resilience can be enhanced by paying attention to a number of sources of information and then deciding what the useful insights might be and how one might build these into their leadership style. Based on experience, there are a few ways which seem to yield good information for the leader to consider:

### **1. Applied Emotional Intelligence**

Over the last few years, we have seen organizations and individuals recognize that Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a distinct way to ensure that leaders recognize where personal biases and ingrained (often unconscious) habits and beliefs may be 'getting in the leaders' way'. With the

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<sup>6</sup> Deierlein, T. (2014) 11 Timeless Principles of Leadership (US Army 1948). Retrieved June 8, 2022, from <http://www.academyleadership.com/news/201406.asp>

science which is available to look at approaches in a rigorous way, a number of tools and instruments are available which are both valid and reliable.

With one client, a decision was made a few years ago to modify how they gathered data and information for use by their next generation of senior leaders. A very good 360 instrument was replaced by EQ-i 2.0, a respected emotional intelligence instrument which meets the criteria of being both valid and reliable. (As noted earlier, there are relevant discussions on the Queen's IRC website by Linda Allen-Hardisty, a foremost EQ-I 2.0 practitioner. Her insights are valuable in understanding the potential represented by tools such as this).

The 360 process was retained alongside the EQ instrument but changed to a focused qualitative approach where coaches could engage in gathering precise perspectives on developmental needs for those moving to more senior roles. The value of this approach is that the individual can bring a curious and learning-focused mindset to how intention is aligned – or not – with actual outcomes. For some of my clients, the information generated by the EQ tool has been key to them integrating some more positive behaviours into their leadership styles. As a final observation, in my experience, leaders who inspire do not always recognize or admit that they run the risk of burnout. Support for others, taking empathy for the situation of others to heroic levels and not balancing self-care with 'other-care' can be cumulative and result in burnout which seems to 'creep up'. A recent example from my work involved a most-effective and intelligent client in a recent leadership development program. She attended to both the needs of team members and to those of clients in a masterful way. But her level of commitment left little energy for self-care and she needed to stand back at one point in order to pay attention to critical stress issues in order to re-establish balance. Again, this is an area where sound EQ insights and the application of such techniques as mindfulness can help both individuals and their colleagues to mitigate the potential risks of extreme, unmanaged and perhaps unacknowledged stress.

## **2. Learning Through Upward Feedback**

Upward feedback has been a mainstay in many organizations as leaders look to perceptions from those they lead and guide whether as individuals or in teams. Again, the curious – and courageous – leader can derive significant insights on where their ability to inspire stands out and where it might be made more consistent and effective.

In my experience, some leaders, while protecting confidentiality, probe further as to the information they are provided. They convene conversations to first share the unattributed information and then talk about what they understand and what changes or modifications might look like. While some see an element of risk in such a process, others have recognized

that a strong open trusting relationship will support a deeper dive and ensure the understanding by both parties of what works and what might work even better.

### 3. Working on Making Work 'Meaningful'

A third initiative again speaks to the building of trust (and inspiration) and links directly to the learnings of individuals and teams. Determining what employees need and want is not overly difficult; *delivering consistently on those expectations is where challenge lies.*

I enjoy the often-provocative Bartleby columns on work life from The Economist. They spur further thinking and over the past couple of years they are written in the context of work that is largely virtual in nature. Recently I re-read two of the columns, the first from June 5, 2021, and the second from January 15, 2022.

In the first, the author reflects on the work of David Graeber who took the view that people “feel, from time-to-time, that their work is meaningless”. The column continues: “Alienation depends on how the workers are treated by those in charge. If managers are respectful, supportive and listen to workers, and if the workers have the opportunities for participation, to use their own ideas and have time to do a good job, they are less likely to feel that their work is useless.”<sup>7</sup>

The second column is what triggers this last thought as to how leaders can carry out their individual work, ‘re-charge’ while also inspiring followers and colleagues and focusing on work that holds meaning. ‘Of Remote Work and Writing’, the author admits that writing may seem counterintuitive in a world of virtual work: “Writing is not always the best way to communicate in the Workplace. Video is more memorable; a phone call is quicker; even PowerPoint has its place”.

And then the author continues: “But for the structured thought it demands, and the ease with which it can be shared and edited, the written word is made for remote work”<sup>8</sup>

From my own experience, writing allows me to arrive at greater clarity in communicating ideas; further, it supports a lesson from days past when a mentor impressed on me that clear writing generally reveals clear thinking as the two often go ‘hand-in-hand’. More to the point, sharing clear ideas with others also models what inspiring leaders do as they in fact set a standard of quality for communicating effectively and consistently while also revealing their current

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<sup>7</sup> Bartleby (2021, June 5<sup>th</sup>). Detecting the Real BS. The Economist Bartleby. (2021, June 5). Retrieved June 8, 2022 from <https://www.economist.com/business/2021/06/05/why-the-bullshit-jobs-thesis-may-be-well-bullshit>.

<sup>8</sup> Bartleby (2022, January 15). Of Remote Work and Writing. The Economist. Retrieved June 8, 2022 from <https://www.economist.com/business/2022/01/15/remote-work-and-the-importance-of-writing>.

thinking for challenges and pursuit of 'better ways'. And writing invites engagement and exchange in the service of shared leadership thinking.

## The Broader Work of the Inspiring Leader

By 'broader work', I mean that this work of enhancing the leader's ability to inspire happens in the company of and with the support of others; again, self-reflection is made possible through wider exchange. Some of the suggested approaches which leaders can consider will link, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, with personal work discussed above. What is different is the level of engagement with colleagues and teams and the explicit engagement by the leader in continuing to learn how to most effectively bring inspiration to the work of the organization and by its people.

A few assumptions are foundational to the ideas in this section:

1. First, the leader is confident, has a learning and development mindset and believes that better ideas emerge when initial thinking is shared, challenge follows, and refinement occurs. And of course, refinement and participation in that process feeds directly into strengthened commitment by all;
2. Second, the leader recognizes that modeling behaviours is stronger than listing or telling what is desired. People believe what they *see* much more than what they hear; and the wise leader will ask if what is modelled is helpful and what might be more helpful?; and
3. In a fast-paced world, the inspiring leader knows when to take the time necessary to ensure engagement and commitment

## Practical Examples of Inspiring Leadership

I want to highlight two practical actions which inspiring leaders might explore with a view to adding to their own 'brand' as being inspirational. In each example, inspiration is modelled through engaging others in co-creating solutions.

The approaches and processes I describe have the effect of tapping into the 'discretionary effort' each of us has to contribute more than what is expected. As Simon Sinek reminded us earlier in this article, if I know 'why' you are doing something, I can decide if that *is something I want to buy into*.

### 1. The Discovery Exercise

This initial action option is simple, clear and a real example from a coaching client I

recently worked with. She is perhaps the most emotionally intelligent individual I know, respected for her subject matter knowledge and admired for her leadership style. And I would add from my direct experience, embodies the courage one looks for in a leader.

Without any guarantee of success, she was clear that her team was ready to begin to shape their careers in a more direct way. She developed a set of “discovery” questions, which probed what might drive efficiencies and greater satisfaction from the actual work of the unit. Inspiring leaders can lay out ideas in a succinct and meaningful way: a simple one-pager captured the ‘Discovery’ exercise.

The exercise was very successful largely because it reflected her genuine and clear approach to all that she did, it was perceived as a true inquiry where perspectives would impact direction both in careers and in the work design and it was viewed as respectful of each team member, no matter their tenure. They knew that she cared about them and their ideas and would follow-through on agreed changes.

There was never any sense of “look at me and how inspiring I am” because inspiration does not need a megaphone. She was known as a leader who knew how to balance task and relationship and had an established reputation for caring for the wellbeing of her team. Towards the end of our work together, she was advised of a promotion to a more senior leadership role, and this came as surprise to no one who knows her and her leadership style!

## 2. **The Personal Mission Statement**

The second approach requires a little more thought and relies on a sharing of ideas in thoughtful draft form, but with allowance for some ‘raggedy’ aspects to prompt discussion, generate better ideas and ensure engagement by colleagues.

As a first step, the leader explains that they have a view, probably incomplete, of what it is in their leadership role that actually inspires followers and creates stronger teams. They want to share their perspective with others and are open to hearing how closely—or not—their perceptions meet those of the team as defining inspirational behaviours.

The ‘platform’ for the conversation is a short, focused personal Mission Statement. The leader outlines for team and colleagues *why he or she does what they do and what they consider the main behaviours which define them as ‘inspirational’*.

At this point they solicit individual views as to where there is alignment around the needs and wants of individuals from an inspiring leader and where something different

is desired. Those views are gathered, synthesized without attribution, then shared in a meeting with the team.

In thanking the team for their thoughtful input, the leader might then comment on any surprises and/or areas where they don't fully understand the input. This step requires that to the extent possible, all can identify concrete examples of what behaviours would look like and why they would be valuable to enhancing the leader's ability to inspire. The emphasis is on learning what the team thinks, sees, wants and needs.

Following this step, the leader can then re-visit the personal Mission Statement, revise as necessary from the initial draft and circulate to the team.

The next step in the process is to re-convene, to become familiar with the revised statement, agree on how the leader might gauge success across the principal behaviours and discuss what the leader might 'count on the team for' as he or she continues to lead with inspiration. This could be as simple as, using an 'inspiration lens', asking a trusted colleague to observe and look for moments of inspiration in meetings or conversely what appeared to be 'missed moments'. No judgement is rendered; rather it is simply a perception for the leader to think about.

The confident and inspiring leader will no doubt ask for ideas as to other areas in which team members can be supportive as 'coaches' around inspiring behaviours.

## The Larger Organization and Its Role in Supporting Inspiring Leaders

Increasingly we have seen that the accomplishment of work priorities in a virtual world depends on a 'one-system' approach to ensuring alignment and engagement. This is no less important when it comes to the *support leaders might expect from their leaders and the broader organization* as they commit to grow in their work of inspiring others.

Ian Cullwick notes that *"an organization's performance platform for management philosophy and related program elements are key to delivering on leadership intentions and behaviours. They provide a platform for engaging front-line staff in a consistent way and mitigating 'strategy and leadership dilution'."*

As a practical example, the leader who has developed a personal Mission Statement around inspiring behaviours, and tested it with teams and other colleagues, might consider sharing it with his or her direct leader(s) and peers. The sharing of the personal Mission Statement opens the door to the leader asking of his or her direct 'boss' as well as trusted peers what the leader might 'count on' in support of continuing to strengthen their inspiring behaviours.

That support might manifest in many ways. For instance, one might look to the senior leader or peer for feedback from meetings where both are in attendance, where there is agreement that compelling and persuasive ideas were presented that are important to advancing priorities and/or enlisting active commitment. Further, the support of the most senior leadership might include a conversation at the executive level that results in a wider engaging discussion across the organization as to the difference inspiring leadership makes in terms of attraction, retention, succession and overall performance of the organization.

## Concluding Comments

The best leaders are inspiring. And today, perhaps more than at any other time, we look to inspiring leaders to guide us in continuing to 'navigate' uncertainty. As well, individuals have more choices available in terms of where they want to learn, earn and grow, and a major influence on those choices will be the quality of the leaders they work with, learn from and who inspire them.

Ian Cullwick comments: *"Inspired leadership can truly elevate and engage one's culture and workforce, but it also needs to be delivered through a human resources strategy that recognizes a number of core principles, including equity and fairness, and balancing the "how" and the "what". Further, inspired leaders ensure consistency of application across all workforce segments – the quickest way to destroy leadership integrity and a hard-earned leadership brand is to compromise these guiding principles and anchoring values."*

At the individual leader level, inspiration can be enhanced and it can also become eroded. It is through a combination of two distinct but related realms of learning that leaders can focus on enhancement and mitigate the risks of erosion: the personal work of deepening self-awareness and paying attention to 'blind spots' combined with direct engagement with those they wish to inspire and who crave inspiration. Together, this creates a powerful formula for today's courageous leaders who continue to build their ability to inspire others within a context of achieving wider priorities of the organization.

Adding to the challenges of leading in an inspired way in a 'hybrid' environment – one that appears to be here for the longer-term – is the need to ensure that the leader has access directly and through colleagues as to whether inspiring behaviours are different for those who work remotely than they are for those who are physically on-site.

It is implicit from the research exercise that a reputation for inspiring leadership is 'conferred' by those who are impacted by leaders, their intrinsic values and character traits and their overt behaviours.

And finally, it is clear that *the inspired leader is a balanced leader*. Some years ago, my former firm was led by an inspiring and senior leader. For an annual conference of group practice leaders, he had commissioned a limited-edition letterpress engraving of a canoe moving through white water, with these words to accompany the art:

*“Achievement is born of movement. Reach out from a state of balance into one of controlled imbalance and steer with confidence into the rough waters of change”.*

‘Controlled imbalance’ may be a perfect descriptor of the reality for leaders in these times!

Some twenty-five years later, I think that those words encapsulate beautifully the reality for leaders as they provide inspiration and foster confidence and commitment in those they lead!

## About the Author



Ross Roxburgh is a leadership coach and organization consultant with several decades of experience with a wide range of clients, both domestic and international across the private, public and para-public sectors. He has a strong interest in the effectiveness of individuals and teams in complex organization environments; in many cases he brings both coaching and consulting experience to client engagements. Ross holds the designation of Certified Management Consultant (CMC) as well as that of Master Corporate Executive Coach (MCEC). He has been certified in the use of the EQ-I 2.0 instrument as well as the LEA 360. He is a facilitator with Queen’s IRC on a range of programs related to Board effectiveness, Committee evolution and [Performance Management](#). He has written a number of articles for Queen’s IRC on the topics of coaching and leadership.

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Ian Cullwick is a long-time friend and colleague, a senior consummate professional, a Queen's facilitator and a deeply talented consultant sought out by a range of clients. Ian brings rigour, discipline and insights to all that he takes on. And in agreeing to apply his critical eye and expertise to this article along with selected commentary, Ian sharpened both my thinking and my writing. Many of Ian's thoughtful articles appear on the IRC website.

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