

THE LEADING EDGE



Forget everything you thought you knew about leadership. The single most significant attribute in a good leader is awareness. . .

In this new age of business, things are changing. Leaders used to have followers; now they create leaders. It's a shift to greater consciousness. Being aware is the single most significant attribute of leadership.

A leader today is a flexible person, adaptable to circumstances. He or she may adopt a feminine approach

when appropriate, allowing a team to brainstorm new ideas and possibilities. His or her role may be to listen at first and not know the answers. Then, when the time comes for direct action, he or she will take a more masculine approach, summarise the situation and be decisive.

This shape-shifting between masculine and feminine archetypes is a

function of greater awareness and emotional intelligence. Associated with this is a comfort with uncertainty, an artful ability to manage the paradoxical nature of business, relationships and life.

Everything's now a grey area. The old industrial economy was analytical and categorised. There was black or white, right or wrong. But we all know that life's less logical than that. What's right now may be wrong

This is a qualitative shift from the old days, when the only known was the domain of work. Now the unknown, the realm of potential, is our only true guide.

The leader of today isn't interested in accumulating power or status. These are the tools of the ego-based boss, which are more obstructive than helpful. What opens the way today is the ability to get out of the way and be a channel for inspired insight and action.

Consciousness means seeing the bigger picture. It means living on all levels, **not just thinking cleverly, but feeling too.**

tomorrow. What works there may not work here.

So consciousness needs to move up to the level at which both opposites can co-exist. The new leader manages the creative tension between them to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, realising that all mind-made poles are actually complementary parts of one whole.

Consciousness means seeing the bigger picture. It means living on all levels, not just thinking cleverly, but feeling too. How else do you manage relationships and innovation but through understanding emotion? How do you provide a meaningful service for customers if you can't feel?

Even more important is the ability to *be*. This means having your primary attention in the present. Instead of living on the horizontal plane, in which past and future dominate, you bring all your awareness into the vertical dimension, the now. Here, anything's possible.

In the space created by the conscious leader, transformation can occur. The new can move through.

Leadership is, therefore, a spiritual practice, an awakening of awareness and a dissolving of the false self. It requires mindfulness and the courage to face yourself. Working on your consciousness is your primary endeavour. The details follow.

Leadership is no longer a position you hold – it's a service you provide by being in a state of authenticity, and that doesn't mean wielding power over others, but knowing yourself. Only in that is there real authority. **DM**



• Robin Wheeler is an international speaker on consciousness in business, and author of the acclaimed *Insights* trilogy (EntrepreneurING Books) on "being yourself for a living".