CHAPTER 4
The Fundamental Beliefs of a Trust & Inspire Leader

*I bring you the gift of these four words, “I believe in you.”*—BLAISE PASCAL

When I first went to my publisher to talk about the idea for this book, I prepared heavily, hoping to articulate this concept in a way that would communicate how valuable I feel it is. I was scheduled to meet with my editor, Stephanie, who invited her boss, Jonathan, the head of the imprint under which my books are published.

I told Stephanie and Jonathan that I wanted to write a book on the new kind of leadership needed in our world today. I laid out the contrast between Command & Control and Trust & Inspire. I showed how even Enlightened Command & Control is a relic of the industrial age that still prevails almost everywhere.

They both “got it” instantly. Jonathan said that most of the publishing industry is built around Command & Control. (In fairness to the publishing industry, almost everyone I talk to about this concept tells me that “their” industry is primarily built around Command & Control.) Stephanie jumped in and said, “That’s interesting, because I agree that the industry is very Command & Control, but, Jonathan, you’re not. You’re Trust & Inspire. In fact, the way you lead and trust and empower your people is the whole reason I came to work here.”

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that he has delivered tremendous results over the years, but more specifically to how he goes about getting those results.

The Fundamental Beliefs of a Trust & Inspire Leader

Trust & Inspire leaders like Jonathan stand out. We feel different around them than we do around other leaders. It is exciting and exhilarating to be led, taught, coached, parented, or helped by someone like this. Working with such a person isn’t like working with other people. The difference is palpable. Why do we feel differently? It is because leaders like this not only think differently; they behave differently. We want to be better because of the way they treat us, how they speak to us, what they expect of us, and what they see in us. They ask for our opinion and listen to what we say. They paint a picture of what could be—and we become eager to be a part of it. These actions stem from the fundamental beliefs of a Trust & Inspire leader.

Command & Control leaders have a narrow, restrictive view of people and of leadership. Their beliefs about others are limited, deficient, and outdated—relying instead upon labels—and their actions usually match those beliefs. By contrast, Trust & Inspire leaders have an expansive view of people and of leadership. Their beliefs are rooted in enduring principles of human effectiveness—and their actions match those beliefs. Their behavior flows from a deep well of beliefs that are part of who they are as a person.

Collectively, these beliefs make up a more complete, accurate, and relevant paradigm through which we view people and leadership today. Like a pair of glasses, a paradigm is a lens through which we view and interpret the world. The power of an accurate paradigm is its ability to effectively explain, guide, and predict. But an inaccurate or incomplete paradigm is limited and limiting. The beliefs of a Trust & Inspire leader are also like a lens; they enhance our vision. They bring people and things into focus. They help us see the world in a new way. And with that clear vision, we are better able to perform, serve, contribute, and learn. We see people not only as they truly are, but as what they could be.

The beliefs of a Command & Control leader, on the other hand, are like a pair of broken glasses with an outdated prescription that blur our vision and give us a false perception of reality.

Each of us can become a Trust & Inspire leader through understanding and acting on the following fundamental beliefs:

- People have greatness inside them . . . so my job as a leader is
to unleash their potential, not control them.

- People are whole people . . . so my job as a leader is to inspire, not merely motivate.
- There is enough for everyone . . . so my job as a leader is to elevate caring above competing.
- Leadership is stewardship . . . so my job as a leader is to put service above self-interest.
- Enduring influence is created from the inside out . . . so my job as a leader is to go first.

People have greatness inside them . . . so my job as a leader is to unleash their potential, not control them

A Trust & Inspire leader believes that there is greatness in everyone—every person on your team, every student in your class, every child in your home. Their intent is to develop and unleash that greatness while helping people see that greatness within themselves. What sets Trust & Inspire leaders apart is the way that they view people as fountains of greatness, brimming with potential. Because of that, they actively look for the greatness in people. They see the world as a garden and themselves as gardeners. They know that the true power is in the seed. Gardeners need to make the conditions right for a seed to be able to grow, but the seed grows because it has the capability of growing. Gardeners can support a seed, but they cannot make it grow. Like the wildflowers in Death Valley, greatness often lies dormant, simply waiting to be awakened by the right conditions. Just as the ability to grow is within the seed, the true power is within people. That’s plain to see when you walk into a room full of kindergartners—there is so much potential and possibility in each little person! Remembering this helps us look for the greatness in those who are no longer children. Our desire to trust and inspire people increases when we see them from a paradigm that acknowledges their inherent worth, ability, and potential. When we believe in their potential—both seen and unseen.

Everyone is born a genius, but the process of living de-geniusese them.
—Buckminster Fuller

Command & Control leaders don’t see power in people; rather,
they see power in the position. Whether a parent, a coach, a teacher, or a boss, people with this mindset believe that they have the answers and can make or break every situation. They believe they have the power. Whether a micromanaging boss or helicopter parent, this type of person believes that if the people they were leading would just do what they were told, everything would be so much easier. They cannot cede control because they only trust themselves (or occasionally just a select few). Such an attitude may breed compliance, but it stifles potential and leaves little room for growth.

Compare that to the bloom of possibility that comes when you trust and believe in the greatness inside others. Think how differently you would approach your children, interact with your colleagues, speak to your friends from this vantage point. When you believe in people and see their inherent potential for greatness, it opens you up to a whole new world of possibilities. No skills you can master or tactics you can try will substitute for a belief in others. That belief is key to unlocking unlimited potential and achieving outcomes that are different in kind.

While belief in others is fundamental to Trust & Inspire leadership, it’s nearly as important to be able to communicate that belief. Trust & Inspire leaders do all they can to communicate people’s worth and potential to them. Their expression of belief is a gift to others. Like giving someone a new pair of glasses, it enables them to see the greatness in themselves. They gain a new perception of the world and of their possibilities in the world. Their self-confidence and self-trust grow.

From there, a Trust & Inspire leader works to develop people’s potential. It is not enough to see it or even to acknowledge it in words. True leaders unleash greatness by seeing it, communicating it, and developing it.

Command & Control leaders often don’t see the greatness in others, let alone communicate or develop it. Consider the demoralizing impact this has on people, teams, and cultures. With such a mindset, a leader might maintain the status quo or even get some incremental improvement. But that leader will get coordination only between silos, at best, and will rarely achieve real collaboration and creative innovation. Apathy reigns, leading to subpar results and eventual burnout.

By contrast, I’ll never forget the day I was working with the top
management team at the largest public utility in a foreign country. At the conclusion of our session together, the CEO of the company stood up and addressed each of his direct reports, one by one. Calling them by name, he told each member of his executive team, "I trust you. And here’s why I trust you." He then proceeded to share very specific reasons why he had confidence in that leader, and why that leader mattered to him and to the company. The feeling of mutual belief and respect was palpable.

How much more inspired would you feel about your boss, your parent, your colleagues if you knew they trusted you, if you felt they believed in you, if you recognized that they saw greatness in you—and if they then told you and others how they felt about you? How would this enhance how you saw yourself? How could things change if you discovered the greatness you have inside?

The pattern is a simple, iterative, virtuous, upward cycle: see the potential, communicate the potential, develop the potential, and then unleash the potential. See, communicate, develop, unleash. This is how Trust & Inspire leaders elicit and inspire the very best in the people they lead. The people, in turn, contribute their best—even volunteer it.

As we leaders engage in this upward cycle, we create an agile culture not only able to confront disruptions, but one that also embraces the opportunities such disruption creates. The end result is real collaboration and creative innovation as people are freed, put forth their best effort, and contribute their best thinking. People are inspired and invigorated as you work hand in hand with them to achieve results while enabling everyone to reach their full potential.

Don’t treat people according to their behavior; treat them according to their potential.
People are whole people . . . so my job as a leader is to inspire, not merely motivate

Trust & Inspire leaders recognize that people have multiple layers that make up a whole person. In Command & Control organizations, many think about nothing more than people’s physical needs, neglecting or even ignoring their emotional, mental, or spiritual needs (or merely giving them lip service with impersonal practices). At work, this means leaders give employees a paycheck. At home, it means that parents give children food, shelter, and clothing.

Trust & Inspire leaders know that this is a limited view of humanity and does not serve people well. For people to reach their highest potential, we must see and treat them as whole individuals. Trust & Inspire leaders focus on the four aspects that make up the whole person—body, heart, mind, and spirit. In other words, they recognize and address physical/economic needs (body), emotional/social needs (heart), mental/intellectual needs (mind), and spiritual/meaning needs (spirit). It’s important to note that sequence matters. For example, you cannot help a student meet their mental needs if their physical or emotional needs have not been met first.

If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.

—MARGARET MEAD, CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

For the last few decades, we’ve been making changes by degree—but in most cases, our underlying paradigm about people hasn’t changed. That’s why employees are still so often referred to as “assets.”
understand why a bright student did poorly on a test. A parent would
never understand why an obedient child made a poor decision. Things
happen, but often not for the reasons we think. If there comes a time
when the greatness in an individual is hard to see, it’s often because
we are blind to one or more of the four needs in that person’s life.
It’s seldom effective to focus only on the part of the person we want,
because people can’t be compartmentalized.
When people come to work, they bring their whole selves, even if
they try to go into “work mode.” But that never truly changes who they
fundamentally are. If that were the case, no health-care worker would
ever feel the anguish of losing a patient. But health-care workers do
feel that anguish—not just because of their compassion, but because
the experience impacts their bodies, hearts, minds, and spirits.
Seeing others holistically—rather than as fragmented pieces or
parts—is not just a strength but a necessity. It helps us connect with and
understand the people we lead. We are no longer in the dark as to why
people do what they do, because we understand them. We see them
as people who are capable of giving far more than anyone could ever
“manage” out of them. We are better able to tap into people’s unique
skills and gifts. We are better able to help them integrate the varying
aspects of their lives, to support them in the areas where they need it,
and to help them thrive and achieve total well-being.
We care about people’s overall well-being, not just whether they
can make their needs and lives fit into our work schedule in some
sort of work-life balance formula. As a result, people are happier and
produce better outcomes—whether at an office, in a nursing home, or
simply on a car ride home from school.

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TRUST & INSPIRE
88
In contrast, Command & Control leaders—either unaware or uncaring
of the difference between inspiration and motivation—plow
forward to try to “move” people. They employ different tactics and
tricks, incentive programs, reward systems, spiffs. Many such leaders
get decent results from this in the short term, so they think people are
satisfied. They believe that motivation is all it takes—that people don’t
want more, that they don’t yearn for a greater sense of purpose, meaning,
and contribution.
You can command the body—but not the heart, mind, and spirit.
The heart and spirit will go dormant, and the mind will figure out
ways around the system in which it’s confined. You can motivate hands
and backs, but you can only inspire hearts and minds. External forces are insufficient—even if they get us the immediate result we want. We never truly get the best result, because extrinsic motivation has been proven to stifle innovation and creativity. It can lead people to feel like they need to do whatever it takes to get the reward or to avoid the punishment. That’s not inspiration.

*The ultimate goal is to get to inclusion—where people’s voices are heard and they bring their whole Selves To Work.*

—JUDY MARKS, CEO OF OTIS WORLDWIDE

People not only want but need inspiration. We all have desires to give back, to have a cause, to find fulfillment. Motivation cannot answer this for us. It has to be something deeper—something from within.

I often hear feedback like this about leaders: *They motivate, but they don’t inspire.* There’s great value in the distinction. How would you feel if you were described that way by your team or your family?

I’ll never forget the compelling motto of the 2002 Winter Olympics: “Light the Fire Within.” That is what inspiration does. It lights what is already inside people—their greatness and their passions. Rather than trying to motivate from without, Trust & Inspire leaders look to ignite or fan the flames of the fires within.
people to work for us, but to find people to inspire to work with us. In turn, they will inspire us with their talent.

There is enough for everyone . . . so my job as a leader is to elevate caring above competing

When I was growing up, mealtime at my family home was like a full contact sport. If you wanted food, you had to act quickly. By the time I was a teenager, I was one of nine kids. The problem was that my mom’s muffin pan fit only eight muffins. Do the math: even though Mom and Dad both forewent a muffin, that still left only eight muffins for nine of us kids. If you wanted a muffin, you had to beat out one of your siblings. If my brother got a muffin, that means I didn’t get one.

Command & Control leaders see the world that way. If you get some, I get less. If you succeed, my success is diminished. This scarcity mindset leads to jealousy and an unwillingness to even work with others, much less recognize their success. It can breed bitterness, dissension, and unhealthy competition and contention. It can lead to what my father called the five metastasizing emotional cancers: competing, contending, complaining, comparing, and criticizing. Command &

Control leaders don’t look for the talents or positive attributes in others unless it serves them in some way — and even then, such leaders can feel threatened if the talents of their people exceed their own. Leaders with a scarcity mindset are never satisfied, because they feel a need to beat others to what they see as scarce resources.

On the flip side, Trust & Inspire leaders operate with an abundance mentality. Unlike the eight muffins at our dinner table, there is enough for everyone. We can share the muffins or just make more of them. Or get a bigger muffin pan. Another person’s success doesn’t diminish my own.

Competing against others externally in the marketplace is good. It tends to bring out the best in people and organizations, typically enabling us to improve, innovate, and perform at a higher level to stay relevant. That’s usually not the case with internal competition. It often brings out the worst in us; it significantly diminishes collaboration and engagement; and it frequently leads to a toxic, even cutthroat, culture.
Keep competition on the outside, collaboration inside.
—STEPHANIE FRERICHS, MY SIMON & SCHUSTER BOOK EDITOR

When we operate with an abundance mentality, jealousy dissipates. People become eager to work with others and applaud them when they succeed. Trust & Inspire leaders look for opportunities to celebrate and enhance the virtues of the people around them because they genuinely care for others and their well-being.

The way you achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first.
—IYANLA VANZANT, SPEAKER AND AUTHOR OF IN THE MEANINGLE

While an abundance mindset is all about caring for others, a scarcity mindset is about caring for yourself and competing with others.

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The Fundamental Beliefs of a Trust & Inspire Leader

Scarcity convinces you that there’s only so much to go around, and if someone else gets it, you get less. That means you need to compete, and others do, too. But when you have an abundance mindset, you believe there is plenty— enough for everyone—and that you can all share things like respect, trust, prestige, recognition, profits, and decision making. An abundance mentality flows out of a deep inner sense of personal worth and security. It leads to a natural desire to elevate caring above competing because that’s simply being true to our beliefs. Of course, we want to win. But because we care about others, we want them to win, too. And rather than compete with each other, we complete each other—and together become a complementary team.

Good management is largely a matter of love or, if you’re uncomfortable with that word, call it caring because proper management involves caring for people, not manipulating them.
—JAMES AUTRY, AUTHOR AND FORMER FORTUNE 500 EXECUTIVE

Leadership is stewardship . . . so my job as a leader is to put service above self-interest

One of the quickest—and most enduring—ways to change our behavior
is to change our name or change our role (or the way we see our role). Such an immediate change in name and role affects not only how we now see the world, but also impacts how we want to behave differently in it.

When my first child was born, my entire world changed in a matter of minutes. I became a father—an immediate change in name and role. A commensurate shift happens no matter in what situation a change in name or role occurs.

When we start with the fundamental belief that leadership is stewardship, we are doing both—changing our name and changing our role. Seeing leadership as stewardship will impact our behavior more powerfully and enduringly than perhaps anything else we might do.

A stewardship consists of inherent responsibilities implicit in leadership itself. When we have a stewardship paradigm, we have been given a job to do, and we’ve been entrusted to see it through. Viewing our roles through the lens of stewardship calls on the best in us and helps us release the best in everyone, including ourselves.

People who operate from a Trust & Inspire paradigm have a sense of stewardship about everything, including their time, talents, money, possessions, relationships, and family. Similarly, leaders who operate from this paradigm also have a distinctive sense of responsibility about their role as a leader, seeing themselves as stewards—as having a responsibility for the growth and well-being of those they serve and lead.

Uplifted by seeing others as whole people and fueled by an abundance mentality, a stewardship approach creates a genuineness in our lives that goes far beyond technique and recognizes the unlimited possibilities for positive interaction.

Stewardship is not about being the boss; it’s about having a job with a trust. It’s about responsibility and serving others in order to achieve a greater outcome. It’s about leaving something in better shape than when we stepped into our role. That is what stewardship is about for everyone—whether it be an administrator, a parent, a member of a team, or even an individual leading his or her own life. And it is especially true for anyone leading others.

In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards and teachers.

—PETER SENGE, AUTHOR OF THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE
Above all, stewardship is about putting service above self-interest. Self-interest tells you that you have to put yourself and your needs first. It’s a belief that serving others is for someone else, particularly the weak. Yet leaders who see themselves as stewards see it as the greatest strength. This doesn’t mean they neglect themselves. But they don’t feel the need to elevate their wants above the wants and needs of others, because they know that serving others is what enriches life.

This is why we are so inspired by those who dedicate their lives to helping others—the firefighter who runs into a burning building, the parent who sacrifices their dream for the dreams of their children, the doctor who dedicates part of their time each year to the health and healing of those struggling. These people inspire us because they are models of service above self. Serving a cause greater than ourselves brings us joy. To serve others and care for their well-being—even if doing so doesn’t appear to benefit us in any way—is perhaps the highest form of humanity. Interestingly, it also happens to produce better outcomes. Leadership is stewardship, and leaders are stewards.

We have lost the stewardship connection, at a leadership level, across society. As a leader, it’s not about you. As a leader, it’s about the people to whom you are in some way responsible...And that’s what stewardship comes down to.

—JOHN TAFT, FORMER CEO OF RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Enduring influence is created from the inside out...so my job as a leader is to go first

Leading is about intentional influence—an influence that endures, even when the leader is not present. Such enduring influence is created and sustained from the inside out.

Leadership is about empowering other people as a result of your presence—and making sure that impact continues into your absence.

—DR. FRANCES FREI AND ANNE MORRISS, AUTHORS OF UNLEASHED

When a drop of water drips into a larger body of water, the waves
start at the inside and ripple outward. It’s that way with people, too.
The ripples — the enduring influence — always start with us. The influ-
ence then moves out to our relationships, then to our teams and organizations.
And then to our stakeholders and the external marketplace.
And then to all society. And the best way to create this kind of enduring
influence from the inside out is to simply go first. That’s what Trust &
Inspire leaders do. They start with themselves. They look in the mirror.
They model the behavior. They go first.
For decades, Fred Rogers was a model to people worldwide through
his children’s television show, *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. He was able
to influence and change many lives through his love and vulnerability,
both of which were seen and felt even over a television screen.
One of his best qualities was that he always “went first.” As just
one example, by 1969, laws had been passed in the United States to prevent
racial segregation, but the country was still very much segregated.
Mr. Rogers had already “gone first” by introducing the first recurring
Black character on a children’s show — Officer Clemmons. But that’s
not all. He took it a step further. During one episode in the summer of
1969, Mr. Rogers invited Officer Clemmons to join him in removing
his shoes and socks and putting his feet into a wading pool so they could
both cool off from the heat. At a time when swimming pools across the
nation were still largely segregated, this could have been seen by some
as controversial. And yet Mr. Rogers did it, modeling racial equality
and love for your neighbor to children (and their parents) watching
at home. He went first, modeling the way he hoped others would act.
And the influence he had was profound — and enduring.
While it’s true that Mr. Rogers was a great example, he had a
platform unlike what most have. You may find yourself asking, “How
do I become a Trust & Inspire person when I’m in a Command &
Control culture, and I’m not in charge?”
One answer is simply to go first. All of us are part of something bigger than ourselves, and it can feel difficult to have influence, especially if you’re not the formal leader. But if you want to influence other people, if you want to improve the communication within your team, if you want to change the culture of your family, don’t wait on others. Just go first.

Be the first to:

... listen
... admit you were wrong
... be loyal to the absent
... affirm and praise a wayward child
... keep a commitment
... hold yourself accountable
... admit that you’re unsure
... take responsibility for poor results
... create transparency when everyone else is operating from hidden agendas
... tell the truth instead of creating spin
... extend trust
... give someone the benefit of the doubt
... show respect
... share difficult information
... choose abundance
... be courageous
... clarify expectations
... assume positive intent

If you want to have enduring influence with others, lead by modeling the behavior.

I can’t help but think of Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa and the country’s first Black head of state. A man of incredible insight, Mandela understood and exemplified the principle that enduring influence is created from the inside out, something he consistently demonstrated. He once said, “You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself.”

He also understood the importance of leaders going first. One of the most inspiring indications of that came at his inaugural ceremony, when he put members of his party on one side of the aisle and his jailers—his enemies, those who had kept him prisoner for twentyseven years—right up front on the other side. It was an extraordinary symbol of peace and forgiveness, and an illustration of his belief in going first.
We decided that in order to reinvent GM, each of us top leaders have to first get humble and reinvent ourselves. How can we expect to disrupt the auto industry until we disrupt our own leadership first?
—MARY BARRA, CHAIR AND CEO OF GM

Our Fundamental Beliefs Create Our Leadership Paradigm
The cumulative effect of these beliefs creates a Trust & Inspire leadership mindset — an expansive lens through which we view the world.
Our paradigm matters enormously because it is difficult to act with integrity outside whatever paradigm we have. As we internalize these beliefs and act on them, we will find the strength — indeed, the humility and courage — we need to become Trust & Inspire leaders. Our actions will be guided by these beliefs. And in order to live with integrity and manifest our authenticity, we cannot act in ways that betray our beliefs.

The Fundamental Beliefs of a Trust & Inspire Leader

It is difficult to raise children to reach their potential if we don’t see that potential. It is difficult to help colleagues thrive when we don’t view them as anything more than labor. It is difficult to meaningfully contribute to the world if we want to keep it all to ourselves.