

Contents

*To carry yourself forward and experience
myriad things is an illusion.
But myriad things coming forth and experiencing
themselves is awakening.*

Dogen

Preface:

Engaging the Imagination: The Leader's New Work

by Michael Jones

The Quest for Purpose:

An Introduction by John Huss

Chapter One: A Walk in the Park

The Personal and Social Artistry of Leadership 1

A Third Way of Knowing; **The Space Between – The Personal Artistry of Leadership**; Reverence for the Moment; Living into the Question; Finding Our Way Home; Gates to the Imagination; Following Our Attractions; Listening for the Unheard Melody; Reclaiming the Commons—A Template for Wholeness; An Unbroken Wholeness

Chapter Two: Awakening Presence

The Organic Nature of Learning and Change 26

The Presence of Experience; Listening Into Presence; The Architecture of Space; **Myths That Impeded Presence**; The Myth of the Ultimate Truth; Myth of Separation; The Myth of Efficiency; The Myth of Scarcity; Changing the Light We Live By; A Language of Wholeness

Chapter Three: Awakening Uniqueness

Discovering Faith in Our Own Life 47

Leading From Our Gifts; Finding Work That Lasts; The Gift Changes Everything; Finding Strength for Our Journey; Bringing Memory Alive; The Quest for Enchantment; The Gift Is Also Our Wound; The Community Names The Gift; Creating a Common Field of Appreciation; The Gift As Epiphany; The Pressure To Succeed; Holding Faith In Our Own Life; Why Is The Gift Journey Important Now?; What Is Work For?

Chapter Four: Awakening Beauty

Discovering Our Own Way of Seeing Things 81

Creating Communities Of Care; Bringing The World Alive; Building Soil For Our Gifts To Grow; What Changes The World is Not Power But Beauty; **The Revelations of Beauty**; Growing While Looking; Beauty Is Found In Otherness; The Necessity of Beauty; The Suppression of Beauty; Perspective: When Beauty Finds Us; When Beauty Doesn't Matter; A Geography of Nowhere; Making Beauty Necessary; Searching for Signs of The Beautiful

Chapter Five: Awakening Grace

Discovering What Our World is Trying to Be108

How Do We Let Go?; Intelligence in The Making; An Empathic Connection; The Myth of Holding It All Together; Creation Creates Itself; Remembering The Longing; The Art of Touch; Leading By Feeling; Following the Golden String; Living a Grace-Filled Life; When Grace Doesn't Come

Chapter Six: Awakening Voice

Discovering a Life in Language and Our Subjective Experience132

The Geography of Language; Keeping Faith With the Word; The Gift in the Basket; Leaders as Storytellers; Hearing the Word-Reading the World; Creating a Participatory Language; Finding Our 'First Words'; The Disease of Literalism; Giving Birth to Our Images; The Subtle Subterfuge of How To's; Language and Character; Finding our Own Dialect

Chapter Seven: Awakening Wholeness

Discovering the Commons and a New Centre of Being166

The Longing for Wholeness; Creating a Community of the Imagination; Rekindling the Spirit of Gift Exchange; Reconnecting with Our Ancestral

Home; The Neglect of the Centre; Discovering a ‘Commons’ Sense; **The Architecture of Leadership**; Making Wholeness Visible; Articulating the Field; Leading From Behind; Process as Content; Catalyzing the Space; Creating an Impersonal Fellowship; A Company of Strangers; Creating Spheres of Disinterest; Engaging Wildness; Standing in The New Life

Acknowledgements

Permissions

References

Appendix: Awakening the Personal and Organizational Commons

About the Author

Order Page

The core leadership issues now are not technical but transformational - leaders need to rediscover the roots of their own imaginative life in order to see familiar landscapes with fresh eyes and revitalize the public imagination and our common life.

-from the preface by Michael Jones

Introduction

John Huss

*Michael's conversation partner
in Artful Leadership*

*My purposes are the geography that marks
out my line of travel toward the person I want to be.
Alice Koller*

The Quest for Purpose

It is not the destination that is of importance, but the journey – and the people you meet on that journey. I moved to Canada in the fall of 2001. Shortly upon my arrival, I had the privilege of meeting people who, as it turns out, have had quite an impact on my life and my constant quest for purpose. Michael Jones, whom I met for the first time in January, 2002, is one of them.

In Chapter Three of the book you are about to read, Michael speaks about the fact that one's unique gifts can only be activated in due season, when the conditions are right. The same holds true for the great people one meets in life. Why is it so easy sometimes to shake the hand of a total stranger, yet in other situations virtually impossible to do so? What made me go and talk to Michael one evening in Toronto instead of one of the other 300 people around me that night?

There are no coincidences!

Stop...and Think

What does it take for someone to summon the courage to stop...and think? In a society largely driven by fast technology, fast food and immediate return, we have lost the ability to reflect upon the 'why' of things. We are increasingly becoming slaves of the 'what' and the 'how.' It is in that spirit that

my numerous conversations with Michael (unknowingly on my part) led to this book! Quite regularly, Michael and I would go for long walks (preceded or followed by some kind of food and/or music) to pause and rethink the purpose of our work. It is of noticeable interest that for the artist and the business leader to meet, we both needed to put aside our preconceived ideas of the other's world and create a new space to feed our thoughts.

To Kindle a Light

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being. – Carl Jung

Looking back on our times together, I now understand that ours was a forum for reconciliation on a larger scale; much of our work was about reflecting on how to 'reconcile the often-brutal realities of business with basic human values,' as Peter Koestenbaun puts it so well in his article, "Do You Have the Will to Lead?"

This creation of a space in which we can reach incredible business goals while respecting human values has become one of my most important goals at work. And, as I discovered in my dialogues with Michael, it is only through constant conversations with him and other friends that I was able to find the courage to go back to that question and anchor it deeply in my soul, to let it become my Northern Star.

Just Let Go

Michael and I very rapidly found a creative space in which we could let go of what we knew, or thought we knew, and discover what we didn't know about the other's world. It was through questions that we were able to combine our thinking. I remember vividly how some of our walks were nothing else but a seemingly unending labyrinth of questions in which both Michael and I got lost at times. Somehow we always knew, however, we would both come out enlightened.

For me, the new art of leadership is built on the aptitude to remain in the inquiry long enough to fully understand the real question we are after. As Michael and I did this, we often found our best historical parallel in the Industrial Revolution. In that era, it was the vessel able to with the temperatures of melting steel that created the revolution, not just the product of the steel itself. Today, how do we create in our companies the conversational vessels able to withstand the 'heat' of diverging thoughts and opinions long enough to find the questions that really matter? As leaders our new role is less about providing answers than it is to help companies find the right questions.

As much as I took my inspiration from Michael to frame the questions I was after (or, more specifically, his unique gift of listening to both the words and the spaces in between), Michael also needed me, the business practitioner, to fine-tune his own emerging thoughts around the new art of leadership. Together we wrestled with the question of whether or not companies actually will be able to implement some of the underlying principles described in this book.

Dialogue is indeed the vessel that can hold the heat of transformation.

Find Your Own Voice

As I was browsing through old articles and my own notes from various meetings held over the past four years, I stumbled across the following quote from Michael:

“Conversation is a practice field for finding our voice.”

How beautifully said! This also implies that, although we may have found our own voice, it is only through constant dialogue that we can fine-tune its tone and timbre. I must admit that I thought I had found my voice a long time ago. Then I came to Canada and many things happened within a relatively short period of time: my children became teenagers, I turned 40, we had a beautiful yet unexpected fourth child, my company went through a major acquisition...and life became interesting at last! All of a sudden, things stopped following the linear plan of action by which I had led my life for the first 40 years, forcing me to learn to thrive in the ambiguities, conflicting feelings and contradictions that life throws at us.

Finding your own voice is nothing more than coming to know yourself better in the midst of the constant quest to become a better leader, a better human being. I will be forever grateful for having met many wonderful people along the road, and I'm especially grateful to you, Michael, for being such a great inspiration and offering this book as a testament to the art of leadership itself.

John Huss is vice-president of sales and marketing for an international pharmaceutical company.