

# THE OTHER EVEREST

Navigating the Pathway  
to Authentic Leadership

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OUTLINE

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*the leader's navigator*

It has been said that a life well lived is marked by the wisdom, friendship, and love gathered along the way. Inspired by my brother's untimely death in 2017, I have been working on a project I call my "wall of influence." It's a collage, a collection of photographs of the twenty-five most influential people in my life – people who have shaped me, impacted me, and helped make me who I am today. They consist of teachers, parents, coaches, mentors, close family members, and trusted friends. Think of who – if you were to take on this kind of project – would be on *your* wall. And think about what qualities it takes to earn the right to be placed on someone's wall.

For the past forty years, my life's work has been to develop leadership capacity by guiding leaders – at all levels of organizations and in all walks of life – to their authentic selves. It's about finding your voice and guiding others to their voice. From decades of research and experience, I have come to understand that leadership capacity doesn't come from your title, the letters behind your name, or the size of your office. You can get promoted to being a boss, but you can't get promoted to being a leader. And you aren't a leader until someone decides that you are. You have to earn the right to be called a leader.



My approach to leadership development is built on a simple premise: Leadership cannot be reduced to techniques, tools, or titles. Leadership capacity – the ability to inspire and influence others – comes from the identity and integrity of the leader. Leadership, ultimately, is about presence, not position.

People are not going to be inspired by, or follow, inauthentic people. We want the real deal. We want leaders who are committed to **substance** over *superficiality*, **character** over *charisma*, and **service** over *self-interest*. In short, we want leaders who are authentic – people whose inner compass guides their daily actions and who inspire trust by being honest and real. We want people who are authentic.

“Leadership” is a concept we often resist. It seems pretentious, even arrogant, to think of ourselves as leaders. But if it is true that we are intended to live in community, then leadership is everyone’s essential responsibility. Community is defined by influence, and influence is what defines leadership. This means everyone, to one degree or another, leads. We all make an impact. We all make a difference. We all lead by words and actions simply because we are here doing what we do. The question is, “What difference or impact will you make?”



We make the greatest contribution and the utmost impact when we are ourselves – when we are authentic. It's that simple, and it's that complex.

*Now I become myself.  
It's taken time, many years and places.  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people's faces...*

*- May Sarton*

Awakening to your authentic self is fueled by a voyage that takes us inward and downward, toward the hardest realities of our lives. The best leadership comes from people who have penetrated their inner darkness, men and women who can lead the rest of us to a place of authenticity that is hidden from what the world sees, who have been there and know the way, and in so doing, know the why. You can tell when someone brings “depth” to their life and their work even if you can't describe or articulate it. But like beauty, you know when it's there.

Taking the journey to explore this depth, highlights the inherent duality of nature found both in the physical world and within ourselves.

As most of us know, the earth's highest peak is Mount Everest, rising more than 8,000 meters above sea level. Far lesser known is that the Earth's deepest point is found in the Mariana Trench, a crescent-shaped scar in the Earth's crust located in the western Pacific Ocean, which virtually equals an inverted Everest at more than 8,000 meters *below* sea level.

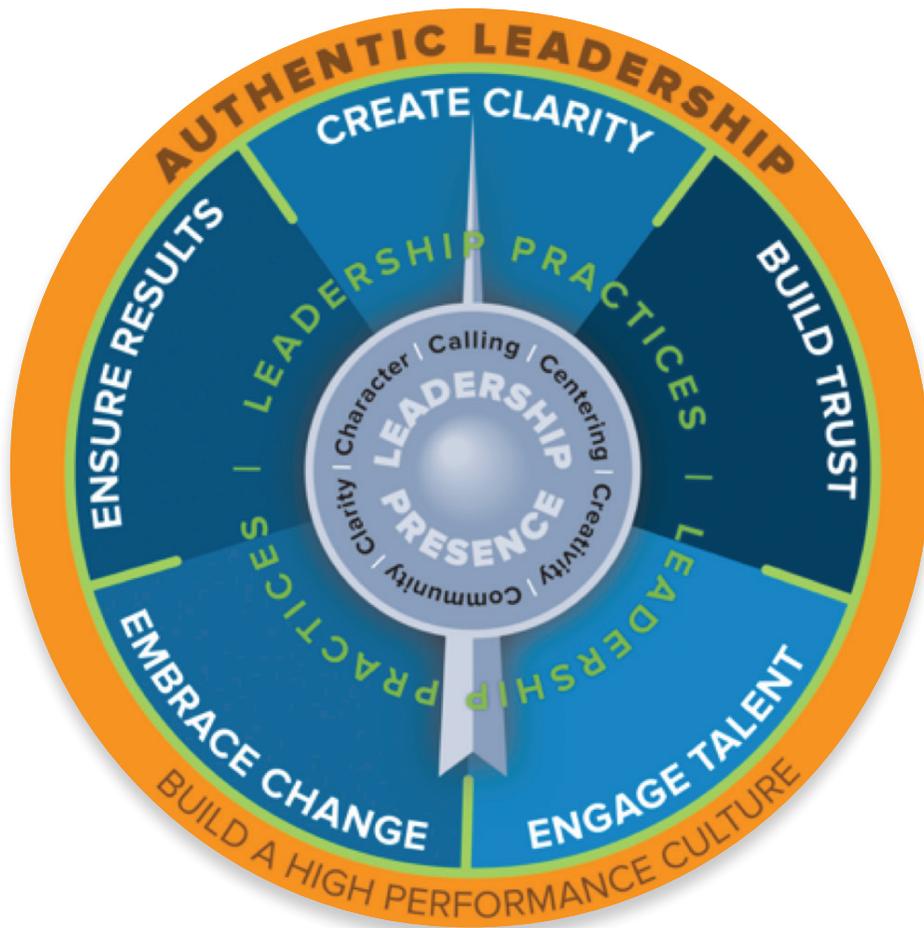
To attain the capacity to influence in today's changing and demanding world, along with the depth to lead with a strong, authentic presence requires an inner journey, a journey to one's heart, a journey to what I call the "*Other Everest*." If we are to impact the world deeply, it must come from a place deep within us.

The other Everest is as vast and formidable as any physical peak. It is just as important to our personal development and to the attainment of our own definitions of success as any outward pathway we may pursue.

It's a journey that requires leaving our comfort zone at the surface and diving far within ourselves, often facing up to difficult questions and hard truths. But ultimately, it's an adventure that is rich in rewards, providing invaluable insights and guideposts toward becoming real, developing our leadership presence, and amplifying our impact – harnessing the power of authentic leadership.

It is my intention to create authentic communities of like-minded leaders – difference-makers who are committed to making a positive impact. To accomplish this, I facilitate three-day retreats on Authentic Leadership – and I invite you to join me.

In these retreats, we create a space to pause, go inside, and connect with your authentic self. If you are committed to being a better leader by being a better person – through increased self-awareness and a stronger, clearer purpose and presence – and could benefit from a community of support with other authentic leaders, join me for a renewed perspective on leadership and a life-changing experience.



## A COMPASS

The journey toward authentic leadership is a process that involves continually strengthening the core elements of leadership *presence* (center of the compass) and utilizing this as the foundation of leadership *practices* (middle layer).

Achieving alignment between presence and practices, while striving for continual improvement in all areas, is the key to advancing as an authentic leader and driving a high-performance organization (outer layer).

The focus of *The Other Everest* public workshop is primarily on the inner circle: **LEADERSHIP PRESENCE**. The agenda for three days is essentially the innermost elements of authentic leadership presence:

1. **CLARITY:** *Living in Alignment with Your Values.*

In this module, we go through a process of clarifying your core values, how you personally define success in your life, and what truly matters to you. Then you design a process for living a life aligned with your core values rather than default to a life under the tyranny of the urgent.

2. **CHARACTER:** *The Courage to Face the Demands of Reality.*

This module focuses on the four key components of character: a) Personal Responsibility; b) Integrity; c) Composure; and d) Grit. You'll learn how the strength of your character is what sustains you and what makes you trustworthy.

3. **CENTERING:** *Knowing Your Worth Away from Your Work.*

In these days of incessant busyness and constant availability, this component, which will run through the entire retreat, focuses on stopping in the midst of the tyranny of demands and noise to get your bearings and reset your internal compass.

4. **CALLING:** *Where the World's Need Meets the Soul's Desire.*

This module explores awakening to your life purpose – your reason for being. We will explore your *inner* purpose as well as your *outer* purpose and guide you to living a life aligned with your why.

5. **CREATIVITY:** *Awakening the Artist Within.*

In this module, you will discover how to release the constraints you have put on yourself that limit your capacity of innovation and creative expression.

Creativity is not about producing art. It's about seeing the world more slowly – so that original ideas can come through you and through the people that you lead.

6. **COMMUNITY:** *Connecting with Your Tribe.*

This module is about identifying what you need from a community – mentors, confidants, guides – who will support you and help hold you accountable to stay on track with your authentic self as you leave the retreat.

We started by reflecting on your own “wall of influence” project and had you think about who would be on your wall. What I leave you with is an even more important question.

*Whose wall will you earn the right to be on one day?*

*You enter a forest at the darkest point, where there is no path.  
Where there is a way or path, it is someone else's path.  
You are not on your own path.  
If you follow someone else's way, you are not going to realize  
your potential.*

*- Joseph Campbell*

By finding your own path, you are able to inspire and guide others to theirs. This is the path of authentic leaders.

A bit of advice given to a young First Nations man at the time of his initiation:

*“As you go the way of life,  
You will see a great chasm.  
Jump.  
It is not as wide as you think.”*

Each of us has within us, a calling. While the outside world pushes us, something within pulls us. Let your deepest desires lead you. If this retreat sounds like a journey for you, check out my website: [www.davidirvine.com](http://www.davidirvine.com) or email [val@davidirvine.com](mailto:val@davidirvine.com).

Remember: Whenever you are in doubt, resist the natural human tendency to go faster, and instead, go deeper.



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