

The Breakthrough Method
to Help You Realize Your
Vision, Empower Others,
& Ignite Positive Change

BOUNDLESS LEADERSHIP

Joseph Loizzo

MD, PhD

Elazar Aslan

MBA, PCC

Edited by Alice Peck



SHAMBHALA

PREFACE

OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE

Elazar Aslan

As a born-and-bred marketer, it's second nature for me to create a product or brand with a precise understanding of the overlap between the target audience, the competitive frame, and the value proposition, yet this book eschews those principles, and more than that, it violates the fundamental law of targeting an audience, as *Boundless Leadership* is written to benefit everyone.

Joe and I do not see leadership as an executive position of power or set of skills honed to influence others. We see it as a way of being. A way that manifests a reality born from our authentic aspirations and shaped by fearless grace. Although the traditional view of leadership is defined by the sphere and gravity of influence over others, the power of boundless leadership is sourced from the radical leadership of self. We believe that the real impact of leadership springs not from seeking power over others in a futile attempt to control conditions and outcomes but from clearing, seeding, and cultivating our inner terrain to yield a harvest we can share with everyone.

To be clear, this was not my understanding when I studied at Wharton or when I trained in the upper echelons of corporate America or frankly, even when I founded my own firm. Yet, it was from those experiences that the sobering awareness that the emperor had no clothes dawned. I struggled with all the distractions and wasted energy that plague most business organizations. How could a leader playing by the rules of a zero-sum game create true wealth and abundance? If

the big prize is available only to the select few who best separate themselves from the rest, how could true engagement and collaboration emerge? What was the purpose of a professional “me” and a personal “me” who dressed, spoke, and even acted differently? Why was “Thank God it’s Friday” an acceptable mantra for work? Why couldn’t our jobs bring meaning and joy as we continue to explore and discover our full potential? Where were the enlightened leaders who wanted to change all that?

I began to ask these questions not just about the organizations I was part of but for myself as an individual, as one human being. Why am I here and what am I supposed to do? What is the meaning of any particular “we,” and how do we exceed the sum of its parts? These questions opened up a journey of self-exploration, one that took me to several continents to study with different masters in an effort to understand different beliefs. In the end, I found the path of mindfulness emerging from my encounter with Buddhism to be the most helpful. That journey brought me to Joe Loizzo, who like me was questioning whether the established wisdom of his discipline was actually that wise. Our seemingly incongruent energies began to fuse, and a powerful collaboration emerged between he, with his keen scholarly and scientific insights into the human psyche, and I, with my growing awareness of the collective scars of my peers, who battled for higher grounds of success in hopes of capturing happiness. This confusion and disappointment was also expressed by participants in our workshops and retreats.

What began as a shared personal passion became a moral imperative. The adolescent years of the digital age had intensified the toxic fallout of the business world and cracked open—perhaps through sheer necessity—a way out. The proliferation of young CEOs who have exceptional acumen and functional capacities but who lack the experience of managing emotions—their own and others’—has dramatically increased aggressive behavior in the workplace, giving rise to an all-too-common style of leading we refer to in this book as reptilian leadership. The accelerated need for agility and shifting priorities has created greater tension with our instinctive fear-based resistance to

change. The information overload across all time zones in an increasingly interconnected world has generated chronic stress beyond what our bodies can bear, setting our inner critic on overdrive as it insists we are not doing enough or achieving enough or, our greatest fear, we are just not enough. Many of us are infected by the epidemic of imposter syndrome as we measure ourselves against overnight billionaires, disruptive innovators, and social media entrepreneurs who are changing the world while still in high school.

Our clients work diligently to earn the time to rest yet have lost the muscle that creates the space to rest. They worry about the sheer quantity of emails left unattended and obsess about the one email that will signal their demise. They've become negativity addicts, wrongly thinking that if they vigilantly focus on what might harm them, they can be immunized from the inevitable downturn. They struggle with balance in their lives and respond to all this pressure by doing more, driven by the delusion that if they run faster and harder, they can reach the horizon sooner. In turn, they try to unreasonably control others as they attempt to ease the overwhelm within. Because the majority of our clients lead others, you can imagine the ripple effect through their organizations.

At times, this pressurized scenario merely serves as a backdrop for personal crises like illness or divorce or even global disruptions such as a pandemic that wreak havoc on our ability to rely on the familiar, creating extremely challenging times to be managing stress and leading others. Yet, whether it's the day-to-day stress of performance or the stress on steroids that we all face at times, this state of affairs is unsustainable, and the path out must be scaled not only for our own peace but so inclusivity, social justice, and economic fairness can cascade throughout our societies.

On the flip side, the evolution of the digital age has created unbounded possibilities. More people are able to retire at forty with the time and money to ask, "What is my legacy?" Companies have been launched with a triple-bottom line that focuses on social impact as well as profits, creating a "virtuous cycle." Disruptive business models are

founded on the belief that everyone can win, upending the zero-sum mindset. Age and hopefully soon, gender, race, heritage, religious beliefs, and other demographic distinctions are dissolving under the force of our shared humanity and the single planet we inhabit. Our ability as individuals or small groups to turn ideas into realities has never been greater in the history of humankind.

However, the moral imperative that has driven Joe and me to write this book is not limited to the magnitude of the pain we want to alleviate or the opportunities we want to unleash. It is fueled by the knowledge that the path from our old way of being to the new one, despite the steep learning curve involved, is traversable by anyone and everyone who wishes to walk it.

Over the past decade, we've married the quintessence of the esoteric to a stepped methodology, creating the most direct path to the highest pinnacle of leadership, the methodology we refer to as boundless leadership. The steps have been carved by the sages who walked them, the guardrails have been erected by the cutting-edge neuroscience that informs it, and the trails have been marked by the people who've blazed them. There is no reason for any of us to be hindered by self-doubt, imprisoned by our inner critic, or bound by self-limiting beliefs when we can lead by drawing on the best we have to offer from an integrated mind, heart, and body. One's leadership no longer needs to be guided by the pessimistic projections of a culture of self-limiting beliefs, when we can as easily lead by the boundless imaginings of a world of possibilities—for self, other, and all. And with capitalism itself on trial, and each shareholder relegated to being just another stakeholder, the time is ripe for boundless leaders to arise and create a world we are proud to leave for our children and our children's children.

If the idea of this journey has a modicum of interest for you, then this book is offered to honor the part of you that longs for it.

Happy trails.