

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 EVOLUTIONARY TIPPING POINT

Joe Loizzo

Leadership—the timeless art of fostering the best in oneself and others—is at a turning point. The landscape we live and work is evolving rapidly. The digital economy, the global marketplace, unlimited connectivity, exploding interdependence, environmental crisis, the drive toward greater inclusivity and equity each demand meaningful changes in how we conceive, develop, and embody leadership. Yet even taken together, these current trends barely scratch the surface of the deeper tectonic shifts of our pivotal age: the culmination of humanity’s incremental progress toward global civilization; and the growing maturity in our scientific understanding of human nature and its malleability.

The perfect storm out of which boundless leadership emerges involves the convergence of four historic trends. First, new science shows unmistakably that we’re capable of adopting a more social and sustainable way of being leaders and humans. Second, our current age of global interdependence and complexity makes it imperative that we seriously accommodate that new way. Third, the unacceptable cost of business as usual on our well-being as individuals, our social progress toward racial, gender, and class equity, and our environmental crisis all add to the imperative that we develop a new culture of business that is truly healthful, equitable, and sustainable. Finally, the unlikely merging of neuroscience with humanity’s most potent contemplative

methods of mind/body change—training in mindfulness, compassion, imagery, and breathwork—offers the missing link: an evidence-based method of making a new way pragmatically possible, reproducible, and scalable.

Elazar and I have written this book because everything we've learned in the course of our personal and professional lives has convinced us that a deeper shift in our way of being is not only critically necessary for the challenges we face today but more possible and practical than ever before in history. After spending our early careers facing the growing costs of traditional leadership in our respective fields, we both set out on our search for alternatives wherever we could find them—from current thinking and research to some of the world's oldest traditions of self-transformation. Our shared fascination with the contemplative science and practices of India and Tibet is what brought us together over two decades ago. Over the years our dialogue has deepened to the point where our dual perspectives on how leadership needs to change—mine coming from neuroscience and psychotherapy, his from business consulting and coaching—began converging and allowed us to share clients, teach together, and fine-tune our teamwork.

*Boundless Leadership* is the fruit of our two converging life journeys—part manifesto, part road map. It makes the case for the fundamentally new way of being and leading we need to navigate this final phase in our collective human transition to truly equitable global interdependence. And it lays out a step-by-step path of transformational learning and practice that can empower us to sustainably be at our best, inspire others to realize their best, and embody new ways of being human that can have far deeper and wider positive impact than any personal best we dreamed possible. Elazar and I have written *Boundless Leadership* for anyone and everyone. Whether you're a CEO, manager, team leader, grassroots organizer, consultant, coach, social entrepreneur, spiritual guide, caregiver, or community activist, this book offers the tools you need to lead yourself, lead others, and transform your whole being and world.

We call this new form of leadership “boundless” for four reasons:

First, because it taps our full human potential for social engagement and harnesses it to the traits of mind, heart, and body—self-awareness, authentic engagement, embodied flow, respectively—which extend human leadership beyond its stress-imposed boundaries.

Second, because its insights and practices, when internalized and embodied, irreversibly shift our minds, brains, and bodies into a mode that empowers our natural competence to communicate, cooperate, and cocreate in equity and interdependence, making our impact as institutional and social leaders potentially boundless.

Third, this form of leadership is boundless because it challenges us to conceive and embody a vision, narrative, flow, and manner not limited by our familiar stress-reactive identity or monologue or to the survival-based energy, lifestyle and embodiment that have driven the natural evolution of life and cultural evolution of civilization until now.

Fourth, and perhaps most powerfully, because it's not limited to scarcity-based hierarchical ideas of leadership as restricted to the elite few who occupy positions of privilege and power in mainstream organizations within industrialized societies but applies equally to the entire field of human beings and groups in any and all life contexts, institutions, and communities around the world. In other words, it expands the domain of leadership to the boundless reservoir of potential innate in humanity.

By cultivating our competence for unbiased, nonreactive, fearless social engagement—through integrated disciplines of mind, heart, and body—then aligning and integrating these into a new way of being and leading, we clear the path to having a boundless positive impact within our family, team, institution, community, and interdependent world.

The history of human civilization and of life on this planet has reached a tipping point. As the heirs of a seventy-million-year explosion in social evolution, in the lightning flash of fifty thousand

generations, we humans have gone from being among the most vulnerable life-forms on earth to the top of the food chain, endangering our future and the planet. While our modern forebears assumed the destructive, reptilian side of human nature was fixed and unchanging and taught us to invest in outer material progress at the expense of self-change, science—the vanguard of modernity—has since conclusively found that they were dead wrong. Fortunately, this next enlightenment has come in the nick of time to show us all a way out of the dead end of us-versus-them othering and the dinosaur of stress-driven leadership. Its historic amalgam of social neuroscience and contemplative practice has already begun to act as a catalyst for the deep transformation we need in our way of being as leaders and human beings.

Given the urgency and historic opportunity of our age, Elazar and I are grateful to be able to share our vision and practice of boundless leadership. It is our sincere hope that this book and our Boundless Leadership program will be the catalysts you need to spark your transformation as a leader and help us tip the balance of our future toward sustainably abundant and fully equitable global interdependence. Remember, interdependence doesn't just make things more complex, it also means we each, through our self-transformation, can cause ripple effects that change the course of history and life itself. With our intimate and infinite connectedness, there has never been a time in history when one individual can make such a widespread, lasting difference as we can now. Our humanity need not be an inconvenient truth; with enough awareness, care, and practice we can evolve to have a boundless impact that benefits all life on earth.