

Chapter 6

New Habits of the Mind: The Ways of a Leader in Balance

A leader is a *brand* and like a brand, leaders and their organizations are built from the inside out. When we say, “I like the way that person thinks,” we make a judgment about something broader than a style of leadership, more than a set of leadership characteristics and behaviors, and deeper than a way of leading. We judge the way a person thinks. This goes well beyond a style or approach; it’s more telling and more robust. It is about a leader’s way of seeing, thinking, and interpreting meaning for their organization—each at the foundation of what’s inside a leader. This leader embodies the brand promise and its values and, as such, sets the tone and direction for the organization.

Becoming a leader in balance calls for two essential new habits of the mind—fundamental shifts in ways of thinking—a shift from emphasis on control to balance and from ways of behaving to ways of thinking. Rather than teaching the external techniques of how to move your mouth (ways of speaking) or move your body (ways of behaving), leaders in balance concentrate attention on the inside first—how to move your mind with different ways of thinking, seeing, and understanding—the factors that establish the foundation and pave the way for a leader’s decisions and subsequent actions.

To enrich our thinking about leaders in balance with real experiences, Kucia asked leaders to reflect on the topic of collaboration and leadership, and individual and organizational

learning and change. He then listened for common patterns in their ways of thinking, seeing, and understanding situations. He was listening carefully to leader's responses looking to integrate and organize the way leaders think and reflect across the image of a leader in balance—a fully integrated person who is simultaneously a person who is a critical thinker and reflective strategist (head); is a moral and ethical builder of trust (heart); and who shares power and authority and encourages innovation (hand).

Creating this image of an individual who thinks with the *head of a strategist*, makes choices with a *moral and ethical heart*, and leads with the *hand of a collaborative leader* may seem lofty and is rarely found, but given the challenging role of leadership today, Kucia believes setting high standards and thinking in terms of the ideal is both warranted and demanded by constituencies around the globe.

Kucia also listened for an awareness of the leader as brand and the importance of trust as they shared and explored the ideas, observations, and challenges from an intellectual and experiential perspective that have led them to their own evolving personal brand of leadership.

The Ways of Thinking of Leaders in Balance: A Brand of Collaborative Leader

“The leader’s way of seeing things has special weight. Leaders manage meaning for one group, offering a way to interpret or make sense of and so react emotionally to a given situation,” according to the authors of *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*.¹ Leadership in balance is not a *style* of leadership; rather it is leadership with a *personal style*. Leadership in balance is more than a set of leadership characteristics and behaviors and it is deeper than a way of leading. Instead, leadership in balance is a way of thinking, a way of understanding and being that forms the foundation for a leader’s decisions and actions. A leader in balance is a robust brand of leader best suited for guiding a living organization of talented people in a contemporary, global, and ever-changing world. Just as a brand is built

from the inside out, so are collaborative leaders and their organizations. This brand of leader sets the tone that permeates the culture deep into the organization and beyond. This brand of leader truly believes that the challenges of change are no longer adequately addressed by leadership in control, but by a leader in balance who practices the following "Eight Ways of Thinking":

1. *Approaches leadership as a relationship not a position*

- Shows respect for people by listening closely
- Creates bonds of friendship and a sense of camaraderie
- Engenders a sense of humility balanced with enormous organizational ego
- Creates loyalty to the institution rather than to self, which builds organizational capability
- Understands that leadership is more than one person can accomplish alone
- Needs help and admits mistakes
- Realizes the competitive advantage of harnessing the power of interdependence and purpose-driven collaboration as a way of proceeding as a leader and as an organization
- Understands the operative word is leadership, not collaboration

2. *Understands that the leader embodies the brand promise*

- Is both noble and humble and embodies the values and principles of the organization
- Sets the tone by what is done and valued
- Understands that trust is the essential foundation for collaboration balanced with normal instincts for competition
- Addresses issues with honesty, trust, integrity, respect, and affection for the dignity of others
- Brings social and emotional intelligence to leadership
- Has a transparent way of making decisions with personal behavior that nurtures trust
- Models and communicates a set of expectations and preferences for behavior of other leaders throughout the organization beginning at the top
- Understands that many people inside and outside the organization derive their relationship with the institution through their real or perceived image of the leader

3. *Is motivated by a higher purpose—a mission—and believes that mission drives the numbers*
 - Focuses attention on purpose, mission, and values of the institution to raise people's motivation above personal interest to serve society
 - Realizes that sole focus on the bottom line may lead to short-term thinking and not long-term life
 - Understands that interdependence and collaboration are essential to accomplish the purpose and mission in any organization
 - Energetically collaborates inside the organization so they can successfully compete outside
 - Understands that if we accomplish the mission we make a lot of money
4. *Understands collaboration must have a business purpose*
 - Is a pragmatist—you can't get good results if you can't collaborate
 - Demonstrates positive regard for collaboration because of successful experiences
 - Gains personal maturity and new insights
 - Believes collaboration, cooperation, and interdependence are a business and cultural necessity
 - Knows that collaboration is hard work—harder than command and control—and is not the slow, soft side of management. Instead, it requires courage, commitment, and, sometimes, conflict as disagreement to differentiate the nature of a problem or a solution
 - Understands the two parts of purpose-driven collaboration as a means to an end: (a) to reach better decisions and to implement them better; and (b) to get the right answer and to get it executed
 - Believes that the reasons for collaborating are to accomplish something, to solve a problem, to get something done, and to understand that results are the reason to collaborate
5. *Thinks outside of the pyramid in order to share power and spread leadership, authority, and responsibility throughout the organization*
 - Balances the present reality with movement toward the future reality and ponders the future shape and structure of the organization

- Envisions a new structure—an internal network of creative people collaborating on issues that require more learning, entrepreneurial, creative, and innovative action. This produces individual and organizational growth and change, new competencies, disciplined people, thought and action, and a new network of influence, power, and learning that augments the hierarchy
 - Has the skill and judgment—intuition and instinct—to know how and when to unify and orchestrate the network and hierarchy
 - Is fluid in the situation and fluid in the decision
6. *Believes teaching and leadership have a great deal in common*
- Is both a teacher and leader which is accomplished by (a) asking hard questions and stimulating learning in search of reality and truth, and (b) which leads to setting the right course and creating the right strategy in a disciplined, deliberate, and intentional manner.
 - Knows a master teacher must be a master learner who listens, who observes, who is curious, who admits to not having all the answers, and who is open to learning and therefore somewhat vulnerable
 - Encourages learning through coaching
 - Learns in the real world rather than intellectualizing
7. *Understands that at the center of collaboration is a personal comfort with valuing the diversity of people, ideas, and ways of thinking*
- Understands this requires a level of individual and organizational cultural competence
 - Allows people to learn, grow, and trust by spending time listening and getting to know one another in an ad hoc collaborative community—a powerful concept, a network of collaborative leadership
 - Is culturally competent and comfortable with a diversity of ideas, people, gender, ethnicity, race, and nationality
 - Believes diversity is an enormously strengthening factor—getting the right people and right balance
 - Understands that comfort and trust of diversity gives more potential to include others
8. *Believes that the challenge of leading change is not about leadership in control, but leadership in balance*

- Believes that a collaborative leader is an integrated person, not a user of techniques or adopter of styles
- Is comfortable with ambiguity and change, with giving direction and making decisions
- Blends the use of data with good judgment and, oftentimes, intuition, instincts, and wisdom to skillfully balance the forces of competition (bottom-line driven) collaboration (purpose driven), teaching (knowing and challenging) learning (curious and reflecting), and the hierarchy (dependence) with the network (interdependence) to meet the challenges (complex or linear) and changes (transformational or incremental) needed to accomplish the leadership challenge at hand.

The Eight Ways of Thinking, when applied to the paradoxical, real-world challenges that are addressed in chapter 4, capture the leadership challenges that must be managed in a balanced manner as they are organized and brought to life in The Kucia Balance Framework. With a fuller understanding of the new habits of mind, we shift our emphasis from ways of behaving “to ways of thinking,” and we look again to Asian wisdom for some clues to help us understand the shift from control to balance.

Understanding the Power of Balance: East Informs West

In chapter 4, we discussed the structure of the ways of leadership and highlighted the need for good judgment, intuition, and even wisdom in order to arrive at a balance between the *together* and *power* dimensions of the balance framework. So, what more can we learn about this concept of balance that is so critical to the thinking and being of a leader in balance?

In William R. Torbert's 1991, *The Power of Balance*, he approached his study of the use of power and leadership from an oblique direction as he flipped the balance of power and dug deeply into the power of balance, a concept that is at the very foundation of our book. We believe that the challenges of leading change in the twenty-first century are not about leadership in control, but leadership in balance. Torbert develops seven separate archetypes that key on leadership behaviors ranging