



Conscious Leadership as a Journey

Conscious leadership means operating from a deep awareness of the guidance that lies behind our lives. We are more than the frames of reference that inform our actions. Who and what we are comprises both the known and unknown dimensions of our Self. This isn't difficult to understand when we talk about competencies and potential. If we describe ourselves in terms of what we have done or can do, we are describing competencies – what is known to us. However, if we describe ourselves as also possessing latent potential then we are pointing to what is yet unknown but very much alive within us.

Where does this potential come from? Why do we have it? For what purpose does it serve? These are some of the questions that begin to help us understand that the journey to greater realization of our capacity as leaders is instilled with a sense of guidance. This guidance can be compared to the weaving of the threads of our life into a tapestry - a pattern emerges, unique to each of us, revealed over time. We don't know what it will finally look like because our lives are not finished, however, to paraphrase Carl Jung, the founder of analytic psychology, we can either work in supporting the development of this tapestry (continually renew our life through tapping into unrealized potential), or attempt to ignore it at our own risk (loss of vitality, meaning, and authentic connection to others).

The journey to greater knowledge of Self is a journey of expanding consciousness. The epic story that is the Odyssey is about the journey home of Odysseus from the Trojan War. On one level, it is a story of heroic struggle against unknown forces that can prevent him from reaching home. On another level, it is a mythic representation of the process of increasing consciousness - converting the unknown into the known and extending the boundaries of one's sense of Self. To ignore the challenges of acquiring greater self-knowledge is to be naïve and to avoid them is to never set out on the journey to begin with. Conscious leadership recognizes these challenges, but also knows that to embrace the journey is to deepen one's relationship with inner guidance and a sense of purpose.

Our journey is never straightforward when confronting the unknown. The encounters that Odysseus has with the strange, unfamiliar, and often threatening elements of the world beyond the boundaries of his knowledge required adaptation – a mingling of imagination and creativity with confidence and conviction. Listening to his guidance –

principally in the form of Athena – is how he found his courage and his wisdom to meet each encounter. In the end, his story is everyone’s story to the degree we leave home as one kind of person and return to see it with new eyes because who we are has changed.

In a similar way, the journey of leadership is about change, but conscious leadership takes it one step further through the intention to confront the unknown and expand our consciousness. The journey requires aid and in the alignment of our competencies with our inner capacity is the means for deepening our relationship with our own source of guidance. A journey to Self, undertaken intentionally.



Cam Danielson, Co-Founder and Principal at CLI, works with leaders and management teams to revision future direction and opportunity amid the turbulence of personal, organizational, and societal change. His new book, [Beyond the Horizon: Glimpses into the Lives of Extraordinary Leaders](#) is now available.