

Prelude

Empty Your Cup

Once upon a time, there was an American professor of Asian studies who had always wanted to go to Japan. In due time, he received a grant to go. While he was there, he had the opportunity to meet with a Zen master. During the meeting, the professor began expounding on all that he knew about Zen. While the professor was speaking, the master offered to serve tea. As master began to pour the tea, he continued to pour until the cup was over-flowing, and still he continued to pour. The tea flowed over the rim of the cup and onto the table. "Stop!" cried the professor. "The cup is full! Why do you keep pouring!?" The Zen master replied, "Like this cup, so too are you full of your own ideas. I cannot teach you about Zen unless you empty yourself."

Asian culture has been studying holistic leadership through the martial arts for several millennia. In Japan, one of the classic guides to strategy is *The Book of Five Rings*, which was written by the great swordsman Miyamoto Musashi over 350 years ago. In China, the Taoist *Tao Te Ching*, one of the most valuable books ever written, was created 2,500 years ago. China also gave us another classic guide to strategy, *The Art of War*, written by the Taoist Sun Tzu around the same time. *Leading People* draws from the sagacity of these great texts as well as the embodied wisdom of the martial arts tradition.

In traditional Japanese martial arts, students begin their studies by walking through the door of the school, or dojo. This may seem obvious, but nothing happens until those first steps are taken through the door. Students start training with a beginning rank (called a "kyu"), signified by a white belt, and then move through the kyu ranks, which are typically organized in descending order. Finally, after many years of study, a student would test for shodan, or first-degree black belt. The chapters of this book

have been set up in a similar fashion, following a progression of levels until you reach the end, when you become a Black Belt Leader.

The goal of leading people the Black Belt Way is teaching leaders how to tap into the winning strategy of developing active emotional engagement with those they lead. The Black Belt Way recognizes that, in leadership, an engaged connection pays off—socially, relationally, and financially. This book will help you navigate through the ranks and become a Black Belt Leader.

I invite you to empty your cup and join me in this journey as you learn the truth about *Leading People the Black Belt Way*.

“Leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading people to work toward a common goal.”

- Daniel Goleman