

# Introduction

**A**s we enter the 21st century, there is a growing interest in the topic of spirituality. The words *spiritual* and *spirituality* are familiar to everyone; they are part of a common vocabulary. Yet, when you ask people what these words mean, you get widely varying responses. Some see these words in a strictly religious context. Others believe they have both religious and nonreligious connotations. Still others believe these concepts stand apart and actually transcend religion itself. We respect each person's right to determine what these words mean on a personal level. Because this is a book dealing with spirituality and leadership, we think it is important for you to know what we mean when we use these words.

Spirituality can be seen in countless ways, but perhaps, it can best be expressed as each human being's personal relationship with the Divine. Spirituality connects you with divine energy. This is an energy that can help you to grow and evolve into better and better versions of yourself. Spirituality can also affect your personal energy field as well as the energy field of our planet and the entire universe. Cumulatively, it is the energy that has the power to transform our world and truly make it better for all of us.

There's much confusion about spirituality. Many people see spirituality and religion as being the same thing. We suggest a different lens, one that uses a metaphor of the pipes. You can have different kinds of pipes: copper pipes, plastic pipes, lead pipes, round pipes, oval pipes, big pipes and small. As we see it, the pipes represent religion in all its various forms, with different specifications to those forms based on theology, history, and practice. Only one substance, however, flows through those pipes, and what flows through is the essence of spirituality. Different religions may call that essence different things. But whether you call it divine intelligence, universal awareness, divine wisdom, conscience, or our moral guidance system, it's still spirituality. The difference between religion and spirituality is the difference between form and substance. What we are talking about is the essence of the personal relationship between you and the Divine, whether you're a Buddhist or a Baptist or a person of any other faith, or even no organized faith at all.

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Spirituality is an unseen force that is both part of humankind and at the same time greater than humankind. It's the force through which all people are connected, the great force that no one can completely understand even though most people recognize it in their lives in some form. And it's the connection between us as human beings, the connection between us and Nature, and the connection between us and the Divine, whatever you choose to call the Divine, be it God, or Jesus, or Buddha, or Adonai, or Allah, or Source, or the Universe. And spirituality is also a way of behaving toward each other. It's a way of being human, a blueprint for fulfilling your human potential and the potential for humanity at its best. As you move further away from spirituality, you are at your worst; you are less human, less connected, and less fulfilled. Conversely, as you move toward it, you are more human, more humane, more connected, and more fulfilled.

Throughout this book, depending on context, we refer to *God*, *the Divine*, or *the Universe*. For the most part, we use these terms interchangeably to mean a higher spiritual power. Likewise, depending on context, we use the terms *higher self*, *true self*, *divine spark*, and *soul* to mean the connection everyone has to that higher spiritual power and to life itself. When we use the term Universe with a capital U, we are referring not just to the material universe that is made up of stars, planets, comets, gases, asteroids, galaxies, black holes, dark matter, dark energy, and the like but also to the universe in a spiritual context—a context that transcends time and space, with consciousness and a ubiquitous divine presence.

The spiritual principles of leadership described in this book can increase your effectiveness as a leader if you are attuned to them. These principles are not theoretical; they are both real and practical, and they are accessible to each and every person. The overarching theme of this work is that the expression of these and other spiritual principles of leadership will help you to become a better human being and a better leader.