

1

Leaders, Blind Spots and Learning

'I believe in looking reality straight in the eye and denying it.'

Garrison Keillor

We all have blind spots – they are part of the human condition. But when leaders and people in authority have blind spots, it matters. The more power a person wields, the more lives are affected by their decisions. Since blind spots seriously impair decision making, it is important that we understand what blind spots are, how they emerge and what we can do to help ourselves and our leaders overcome them. So what are they?

From a physiological perspective, a blind spot is an area on the retina lacking the receptors that respond to light. If an image falls onto this area it will not be seen. A popular experiment will allow you to notice your own blind spot.

Look at the image below and close your right eye. Hold the book about 20 inches away from you. With your left eye look at the cross. Slowly, bring the book closer towards you and as you do, you will notice the dash disappears from sight. Your blind spot prevents you from seeing the image that is printed on this page.



In psychology, the term is used metaphorically. It is based on the notion that there are parts of ourselves that we simply do not wish

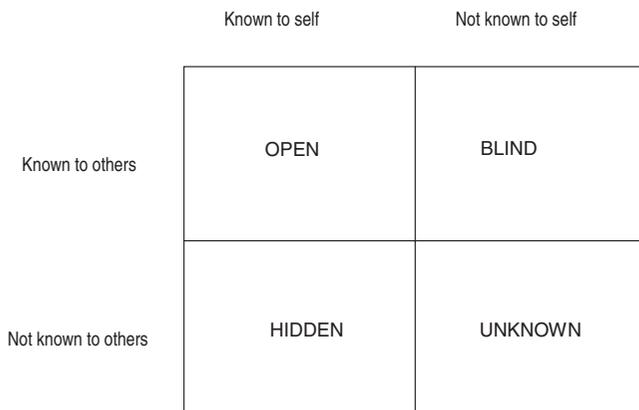


Figure 1.1 Johari's window.

to see – even though they are apparent to those who know us. A popular model of blind spots is known as *Johari's window* (Figure 1.1). Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram constructed a four-box model based upon 'what we know about ourselves' and 'what others know about us'.¹

In this model the blind spot refers to an aspect of our personality that is not known to self but is apparent to others. For example, others may notice that I lack eye contact when talking to people. I, however, may be completely unaware of this. It is only through the process of receiving feedback that the blind spot can be addressed – I become aware of my lack of eye contact and I change my behaviour. In effect, the blind spot is reduced through learning.

In popular usage, we use the notion of a blind spot to refer to areas where people remain stubbornly fixed in their views. A person with a blind spot in a particular area will dismiss sound arguments, refute evidence and refuse to change their views in any way. The *Oxford Compact English Dictionary* definition of a blind spot is 'an area in

¹ Luft, J. and Ingram, H. (1955) 'The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness', *Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development*. Los Angeles: UCLA.

which a person lacks understanding or impartiality’.² The *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* defines a blind spot as ‘any subject which a person cannot understand or refuses even to try to understand’.³ The notion of a blind spot incorporates more than a simple lack of understanding; it includes the sense that the person does not *want* to expand their understanding by listening to views or opinions that they in some way ‘dislike’. The lack of impartiality and refusal to try to understand implies that we are biased towards accepting certain kinds of information and ‘blind’ with regards to other kinds of information.

This is not to say that we have a blind spot whenever we disagree with any idea presented to us. Blind spots only become a problem when they prevent us from adapting to changes in our environment. It is when we refuse to notice or pay attention to information and ideas coming from the world around us that blind spots become an issue, both for us and the organizations that we work for. Blind spots prevent us from learning and adapting to change.

For example, research has shown that leaders’ understanding of the environment can sometimes be up to ten years out of date.⁴ One academic study of a particular industry showed that many managers did not update their mental models in response to marked and obvious changes in the marketplace. This led to senior executives making decisions based on an inaccurate understanding of the competitive dynamics in their industry. It also tended to generate increased conflict, as executives with different mental models of the market perceived different challenges and promoted different solutions.⁵ The research that underpins this book shows that well-intentioned, competent people do not automatically update their knowledge in response to major changes in their environment.

² www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/blindspot.

³ www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers

⁴ Peter’s T. and Waterman, R. H. (2004) *In Search of Excellence*, 2nd edition. London: Profile Books, p. 7.

⁵ Reger, R. K. and Palmer, T. B. (1996) ‘Managerial Categorization of Competitors: Using Old Maps to Navigate New Environments.’ *Organization Science*, 7(1), January–February.

The following definition incorporates the important links between learning, change and blind spots:

A blind spot is a regular tendency to repress, distort, dismiss or fail to notice information, views or ideas in a particular area that results in an individual failing to learn, change or grow in response to changes in that area.

It is worth clarifying a number of aspects of this definition. First, the definition emphasizes the ‘regular’ tendency to miss information. Obviously, we cannot notice all information in our environment, but if we consistently fail to notice information that is relevant, either for our personal or organizational needs, we become ineffective in our leadership.

Second, a blind spot is not the same as a simple lack of knowledge. A blind spot emerges from a resistance to learning in a particular area. At the root of many of our blind spots are a number of emotions or attitudes – fear being the most obvious, but also pride, complacency and anxiety. A manager, for example, might have unsurpassed knowledge in the financial field, but her understanding of people management might be limited. Her people find her cold and aloof and want her to become more consultative and involved with the team. She, however, is resistant to feedback about her management style and refuses to change her behaviour. On closer inspection, we find that the main reason for this is that she believes that her authority could be undermined if she becomes too close to people. She fears that they will challenge her more readily if they get too comfortable with her and that she might be considered weak and even incompetent. Hence, she refuses to even consider the prospect of changing her management style. It is this refusal to consider her team’s feedback, together with the emotional resistance to personal change, that indicates a blind spot.

Finally, the information we may distort, repress, dismiss or fail to notice is not simply written or codified information. It may consist of behaviours or emotions manifested by oneself or by other people. Information is embodied not simply in words but also in behaviours and emotions. Some people do not notice the ‘information’ embedded in their own emotional responses to events. Others

do not notice the information contained in other people's behaviour; they fail to notice body language signals that indicate interest or disapproval or acceptance. Information is everywhere and is not manifested exclusively in a cognitive, declarative format.

We shall see later that blind spots are often rooted in the threat presented by certain types of information to our self concept and sense of identity. We are all subject to blind spots, and there is a tendency to assume that there is little we can do about them. For Max Planck, founder of quantum theory and one of the most important physicists of the 20th century, blind spots were so ingrained in the human mind that they presented an insurmountable block to learning:

'A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents, but rather because its opponents die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it'.⁶

Waiting for a generation to die before accepting a new truth might be said to be a somewhat wasteful and inefficient way of adapting to change! Moreover, a lot of damage can be done in the meantime. When people in positions of leadership manifest significant blind spots, individuals, organizations and whole communities can suffer. This is best illustrated by a few simple examples. We will look at three leaders who are subject to very different blind spots which seriously affect their leadership and their organizations.

Our first example shows a leader who is confident and full of self belief. He has developed a vision for his organization and is trying to implement it. However, he is coming across resistance and he is not listening to what his people are trying to tell him. His blind spot is that he has fallen into the trap of believing that *his* understanding and vision is superior to everyone else's. Where people come up with reasons why the vision will not work, he dismisses their insights and regards them as 'resisting change'. This is a very common blind spot in organizations.

⁶ Planck, M. (1936) *Philosophy of Physics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc.

Rick – The ‘Visionary’ Leader

Rick had just been made CEO of a medium sized chain of specialist home and garden retail outlets in the UK. Although he was a newcomer to the industry, having previously worked in a large food conglomerate, he was regarded as a highly competent manager – skilled technically, strategically and interpersonally. He was well liked and people warmed to his exuberant, positive and optimistic style.

He was excited by this new challenge as CEO, and soon after his new appointment set about crafting his vision for the company. He toured a number of the outlets and spent a lot of time talking to the people serving and interacting with the customers. It didn’t take long before he believed he understood just what was needed in the business. There were some basic financial disciplines that were not in place consistently around the country. It was clear to Rick that increasing the profitability of their outlets was not a clear priority for staff. Nor did the outlets have a common ‘look and feel’ about them. They projected too much the personality of the individual managers and their staff. This was undermining the chain’s brand image and leading to quality issues, particularly in areas where it was difficult to recruit staff.

Rick put together a vision for the business based upon a number of core values, emphasizing financial discipline, personal accountability, sales focus and brand consistency. However, when it came to presenting his vision to the Board of Directors, he sensed that there was some resistance to his ideas. Everyone appeared to agree but there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm.

After the meeting, Rick quizzed a few of his closest team members. It appeared that, for them, and for many in the business, quality was associated with the personal service that came from each outlet having some freedom to express the specialist interests of the local managers and their teams. Rick’s emphasis on consistency and discipline seemed to be jeopardizing this autonomy and was in danger of squeezing out innovative flair.

Rick understood their discomfort. After all, they were used to having a high degree of discretion. He reassured them that people would still have the opportunity to express a degree of innovation, but continued to stress the importance of financial discipline.

He put together a number of project streams that ran across the outlets. Chief amongst these was the financial systems project, which would monitor turnover and profitability on a daily basis – outlet by outlet. However, after a period of six months, Rick started to get irritated – nothing appeared to be happening and results were not forthcoming. Projects were taking a lot longer to implement and costs were spiralling. The promised improvements were not appearing and he felt as if there was a high degree of passive resistance amongst his top team. So Rick worked closely with the HR director to bring in a new performance management system. This would ensure that everyone had personal objectives related to the change projects, and would be held directly accountable for their completion.

Staff felt increasingly pressurized. They were being held accountable for personal sales targets and their outlets' financial results. They complained that this was jeopardizing customer service, and that they felt they had to manipulate customers into buying things they did not need or want. Customers provided feedback that they felt service levels had deteriorated and that staff were no longer interested in discussing their problems or needs. Motivation levels dropped and sickness rates increased.

Soon, Rick and the board began to notice how turnover amongst staff was rising. In fact, they had lost two high-performing managers over the past six months. Rick attributed this to natural turnover resulting from the change programme. He saw it as an opportunity to recruit people who were more in tune with what he wanted to achieve. This was going to take longer than he thought, but he was not going to let a couple of setbacks and an inevitable resistance to change get in *his* way!

This is a familiar problem seen in many organizations. The business needs to improve its financial performance and Rick has crafted a vision of how this is going to be achieved. However, Rick is suffering from the classic visionary's blind spot. He is not listening. He does not have a sufficiently complex understanding of the business and he is not extracting what is valid from the inevitable complaints, natural resistances and self interest of his staff. In sum, he does not have sufficient cognitive or emotional complexity to lead change effectively and make informed decisions.

Read any textbook on leadership and you will soon be told that any leader has to have a vision. However, it is often the case that the vision is based on a personal experience that is not complex or broad enough to encompass the complexity of the situation he or she is dealing with. Everyone's experience is partial and highly personal, inevitably generating a simplistic map of what is a very complex reality. In Rick's case, his vision was based upon some important experiences in his past that helped him progress in his management career. In particular, he learned the importance of strict financial discipline.

The problem is that Rick is so focused on financial discipline that he is not able to listen to views coming from other paradigms. Rick's blind spot is around acknowledging the importance of innovation, personalized service and empowerment for the delivery of his business model. In the past, Rick has not seen these as important components of his business model, and as a result he has not developed a complex mental model of human behaviour (staff and customer) and how it interacts with the business finances. He has a sophisticated financial paradigm and an underdeveloped HR and customer paradigm. As a result, he does not recognize that his staff are attracted to working for the business precisely because of its past core values of innovation and discretion. If he ignores these values, he will find that large swathes of staff will either become demotivated or leave. The demotivated staff will affect customer service and this will impact on the bottom line. So, despite the new emphasis on financial discipline, profitability and efficiency, Rick is in danger of killing his business. This is because he is not developing a more sophisticated understanding of his business by listening to others. Nothing in his experience has led him to believe that their

ideas will work, and Rick is limiting himself to his personal experience.

However, what seems impossible and irreconcilable is actually just complex. What Rick needs to do is to ‘open up his construing’ and allow himself to enter the zone of creative tension where he can ask the question.

‘How can I introduce greater financial discipline into this business, guarantee a bottom line of quality and service, build a distinctive brand image and honour the innovation, flair and empowerment that has made this business successful in the past?’

Moreover, Rick will not have the answer to this question solely in his own head. He will have to engage his staff in coming up with some of the answers to this question and, as a result, will have to go about putting his strategy together to some extent from the bottom up. This presents a challenge for Rick – he has never done this before. Even contemplating it would cause a degree of anxiety and uncertainty.

A vision is often necessary, but in a complex world, visions require a psychological sophistication that many leaders lack. Visions contain a paradox – they are not expressions of ‘truth’, nor are they necessarily ‘right’, but they must at times be treated as if they are right whilst leaving space to consider ways in which they may be inadequate, partial and simplistic. This is psychologically difficult to achieve. Leaders need confidence that they are leading the organization in the right direction, and this confidence can be undermined by a recognition that the vision might need to change or adapt. It is difficult to know when to listen to feedback that suggests you may be wrong and when to ignore it as a manifestation of the natural resistance to change.

Our next example concerns a leader who lacks self awareness. Jay Conger, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at the London Business School, explains that one reason that visions fail is that the vision reflects the needs of the leader rather than the needs of the market.⁷ Self awareness is important, as this can highlight when we

⁷ Conger, J. A. (1990) ‘The Dark Side of Leadership.’ *Organizational Dynamics*, Autumn, 44–55.

are making sense of the environment in a ‘self-serving’ manner in order to protect ourselves in some way. Jane’s story shows how a lack of self awareness can lead to some difficult and damaging problems.

Jane – The Unselfaware Leader

Jane was angry. This was her first senior appointment. If she succeeded as MD of the medium-sized consumer goods business recently bought by her multinational employer, her career would thrive. She had been in place as MD now for over a year. This was going to be a major test of her ability to lead a business. But she was nervous and angry. She had spent a day with her marketing team examining their progress, finding out what they had achieved with the extra resources they had been given over the last eight months. It seemed that they had very little to show for all the additional spending. Having spent a long morning in a meeting with the senior managers, she had devoted the afternoon to mixing with the staff and watching their activities. She had felt her frustration growing and growing as the day wore on. There was no clear, consistent message emerging from the department; moreover, they seemed to be churning out old ideas but with a few new images attached – very expensive images too. And when she had spoken to two of the marketing account managers, they could not say clearly where the business was going and how the marketing strategy would be supporting the business changes. What’s more, she had witnessed a huge row between the marketing manager and one of the line managers about what could be delivered by when. The two managers were in the midst of a full-blown, bloody battle before they saw Jane emerging from an office around the corner. The place seemed chaotic. She determined to challenge her directors at the next board meeting. What was going on around here? The end-of-year results did not look promising and she could see why – the marketing department was not being run effectively due to the lack of high quality staff and management. She resolved to talk to Hugh, the HR director, about their hiring and promotion practices. She

wondered how on earth all these people got to such senior levels in the organization in the first place.

However, at that very same time, Hugh was sitting with two other board members discussing the very real problems with the lack of strategy – someone was going to have to approach Jane about the problem, but she just did not appear to be listening.

What is interesting about Jane's learning is not what she observes, but *how she makes sense of what she observes*. Jane has interpreted the performance problems as being due to a lack of high quality staff and management. She sees this as a recruitment and promotion issue. However, Jane does not believe that she has *interpreted* the situation (and chosen one interpretation amongst many), she believes she has distilled the *truth* of the situation. And Jane's subsequent decisions and actions are based upon the conclusions she draws from this sensemaking.

The HR director, Hugh, has drawn a different conclusion. He believes that the problem is due to the lack of a clear strategy in the business. Other directors in the business are complaining about it but do not have the courage to talk to Jane. They believe that Jane should be conducting a high level review of the business strategy in order to clarify what is happening in the marketplace and where the business should be heading over the next five years. Hugh has tried to convince Jane of this but Jane is not listening. She sticks firmly to her view that the problem is one of a lack of managerial competency at senior levels in the organization. She refuses to contemplate the alternative interpretation. She has a blind spot.

Why does she have a blind spot in this area? If we were to delve deeper into Jane's world, we would see that she would have to face a truth about herself that she would find painful – she is not a good strategic thinker. Jane's sensemaking is driven by a subconscious desire to defend her existing self concept as a good strategist and to avoid confronting her limitations in this area. In fact, if we go deeper,

we can see the problem that Jane faces. Jane believes that to be a good leader you need to be a strategic thinker. Hence, if she confronts the fact that she is not a good strategic thinker, she thinks she will have failed as a leader. She has based her self esteem on her status as MD of a business, and so confronting the possibility that she might not be a good strategist will jeopardize her deepest and most important needs. The implication in her own mind is that she will have failed. As a result, she feels threatened when people like the HR director tell her that the organization lacks a strategy, and particularly when they look to her to provide it. Emotionally she cannot face this interpretation and so the problem bubbles away below the surface, though often erupting in arguments and disagreements between staff and their managers on the front line. She has constructed an explanation of the problem that protects her current knowledge and self esteem rather than facing the tough emotional work involved in renegotiating her belief systems, self concept, behavioural strategies and identity.

But blind spots are not simply defences used by the unselfaware. Let's look at another example of a blind spot arising from the effects of success.

Janet – The Complacent Leader

Janet was happy. It had taken a long time but her tireless striving to get to the top had worked. She had been determined and single-minded and as a result, she had achieved her goal – she had been appointed CEO of Harrisons, an international HR consultancy, over three years ago. The company was doing well and she had quite a high profile. After having appeared in an international business magazine only six months ago, she found that she was approached regularly to offer commentary to the media and had even been offered a regular newspaper column exploring issues around women in business. Because the business was on target and was in a relatively stable, fairly niched market, she did have time to concentrate on other things. And she really loved the lifestyle her higher profile was offering. A large part of her role involved PR, which meant attending functions and meeting powerful people from business and politics. Her network was extending considerably and she was popular.

She was warm, approachable and had a quick humour; she was able to get people to relax and laugh. She also enjoyed being a woman in a world populated largely by men – she stood out and she had always loved attention.

The only fly in the ointment was Howard. Everything seemed to be operating smoothly at work; most of her top team had been together a long time and had welcomed Janet's appointment. Her only competitor for the job had left shortly after he had failed to be appointed. But then there was Howard, the marketing director. He was always pointing out problems. He claimed that a small competitor had been successful in winning a couple of contracts against them and he accused the top team of being complacent! She knew he was sewing discord amongst the team, but she also had complete confidence in the support of the board members. Howard claimed that there had been an increase in complaints from clients – as far as she could make out, this amounted to two complaints, both of which had been handled satisfactorily. But Howard joined the two instances together and saw a trend! At one recent board meeting, Howard had claimed that the team spent too long looking at the figures and not exploring what was happening on the ground, particularly at the customer interface. It took all her patience to explain that the role of the board directors was to provide direction and to ensure policies and strategies were implemented – not to micro manage other people, who were perfectly capable of doing their own jobs.

Howard was her one 'energy drainer' and she was going to have to tackle him sooner or later. However, for now there was too much going on. She had a trip to China next week, an important business function on Wednesday and Wimbledon on Thursday. Howard would have to wait.

Our last blind spot concerns the effects of complacency. Surprisingly, there are still many leaders around who are affected by this particular blind spot – in the public, private and government sectors. Success feeds some deep needs in human beings – needs for self esteem, needs for status, power and influence, needs for autonomy and

control. Once these needs are met, we can lose the fire and determination that generated our success in the first place. There is a tendency to feel ‘I deserve this; I gave up a lot to get here and this is my reward’. Janet has got herself into this frame of mind. Instead of seeing herself as a leader with responsibilities to all those who have stakes in her leadership, she sees herself as Janet – successful, wealthy CEO admired by the people who matter. Of course, she ensures that the business is doing well and takes her duty as CEO very seriously. However, she is no longer hungry for the business. Gradually, without knowing it, she has moved from an offensive mentality to a defensive mentality. From being hungry for growth and financial success, she has moved towards being concerned to protect her position. This has affected what she pays attention to in the business. She now pays attention predominantly to the figures (to determine the financial health of the business) and to the stock markets and investor opinion; unconsciously she has changed her emphasis towards *monitoring* the business rather than changing and growing the business. For her, the reasoning is watertight – Harrison's is doing well and her job is simply to maintain that success; hence, she is monitoring the situation, checking that everything is carrying on as normal and that no problems are emerging. The problem with this strategy is that it is not taking account of subtle changes in the marketplace, most of which are only being discerned by the people on the ground. Big changes are emerging but are currently barely visible. Harrison's current success formula, whilst appropriate for the past five years, will not necessarily guarantee success for the next five years, and by the time Janet finds out, it will be too late to stave off the major onslaught to her business. From being in a business that is sustaining success, she may easily find herself in a turnaround situation.

But Janet's attention is elsewhere. She is enjoying the well-deserved fruits of her success and there is nothing that is quite so sweet as the combination of wealth, status, power, influence and the admiration of others.

Leadership Blind Spots

All of our leaders are highly successful, competent and well-intentioned. And yet all of them are suffering from blind spots that

are affecting both their personal and their organization's performance. In many cases, the skills and competencies of leaders by far outweigh their blind spots. However, if we could learn to master our blind spots, we could learn how to accelerate our learning and better keep up with the pace of change.

This is particularly important today. Blind spots prevent us from adapting our behaviour, our attitudes and our understanding at times when it is imperative to do so. Today, the amount of information that we are required to handle, the pace of change and the complexity of the environments in which we work place a high demand on our ability to learn continuously, and to do so in dialogue and relationship with others. The complexity of our environment is teaching us more than ever that no one person can ever have a monopoly on the truth. All of us have highly personal insights into the bigger picture. Senior managers and those on the ground see fragments of a complex reality, and any truth they may think they have captured changes daily. But psychologically this is difficult to handle. Accepting that we can never really 'know' anything in a constantly changing and complex world feels chaotic. We can feel like victims rather than powerful, competent individuals who can impact our world. To be able to handle complexity and change we need a radically different mind-set – a mind-set that is more attuned to continuous learning.

The complexity of our working environment also places demands upon our personal flexibility – we can no longer rely on *one* way of managing, influencing and communicating. We have to match the environmental complexity with a cognitive, emotional and behavioural complexity that provides us with more ways of understanding and dealing with the problems and issues facing us. A behaviour that works in one context no longer works in another. A certain management style may work in one organizational culture or business context but not in another. A change management process that works in one industry may not work at all in another. What worked in the last few years will not necessarily work in the next year.

This, of course, is all to do with how we learn. It is often taken for granted that people will automatically learn from their experience, but this book proposes that learning is often a difficult process that takes time, skill and care to negotiate successfully. It is difficult to

acknowledge that what we thought was ‘right’ actually does not work in a different environment.

With an increased emphasis on efficiency, however, there seems to be less time to work through the emotional and cognitive challenges associated with learning. Quite simply, more learning and personal change is required of us but we rarely have the time, energy and/or the safe environment within which to do so. Moreover, we have not yet developed a deep understanding of the skills needed to manage a life of continuous learning and change. Learning is a process that can undermine our self esteem. When change engulfs us, we may be required to learn new behaviours that challenge us. Learning can threaten our sense of competence and threaten the sources of our personal identity, particularly our values. Sometimes we resist learning because we feel that we may fail and be damaged during the process. Sometimes we resist learning because it is inconvenient and gets in the way of our goals and desires. As a result of all these forces, we often cling to our old strategies and approaches when they no longer work and may even be harming us. This is why we develop blind spots – in order to protect ourselves from difficult and painful learning.

Psychologists have long known of the processes that can lead to blind spots – cognitive dissonance,⁸ groupthink⁹ and defensiveness¹⁰ are all ways of explaining some of the underlying dynamics of blind spots. What perhaps is less appreciated is how these dynamics operate subconsciously minute by minute as we constantly make sense of our environment.

⁸ Festinger, L. (1957) *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson. Also see Harmon-Jones, E. and Mills, J. (1991) *Cognitive Dissonance – progress on a pivotal theory in social psychology*. Washington: American Psychological Society.

⁹ Janis, I. L. and Mann, L. (1977) *Decision Making*. New York: Free Press. Esser, J. K. (1998) ‘Alive and Well after 25 Years: A Review of Groupthink Research.’ *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Making Processes*, 73(2/3), 116–141.

¹⁰ Sutherland, S. (1992) *Irrationality*. London: Constable and Company Limited. Also see Goleman, D. and The Dalai Lama (2003) *Destructive Emotions*. London: Bloomsbury.

This is particularly relevant to leaders, because leaders often find it more difficult to learn! Like all of us, leaders feel the psychological forces that tempt us to learn what feels comfortable and avoid learning what is painful or difficult. But, unlike many of us, leaders have the power to shield themselves from the painful and difficult, and followers may collude with this. Leaders are therefore more prone to developing blind spots. Yet leaders daily make decisions that affect many people. It is incumbent on these leaders to overcome their blind spots for the sake of their stakeholders. Learning is both a moral and commercial duty.

If we can understand more about the dynamics of learning and blind spots, we can discover ways of significantly enhancing and accelerating our responses to the changing, complex environments in which we live today. That is the goal of this book, to prepare leaders better for the life of continual learning and change that lies ahead.

The next chapter therefore presents the findings of the research that informs this book. It examines more closely what happens when people are required to learn in response to changes in their environment. It also reveals some of the psychological forces that can generate blind spots and resistance to change. Subsequent chapters will then develop ideas and strategies for mastering these dynamics.

