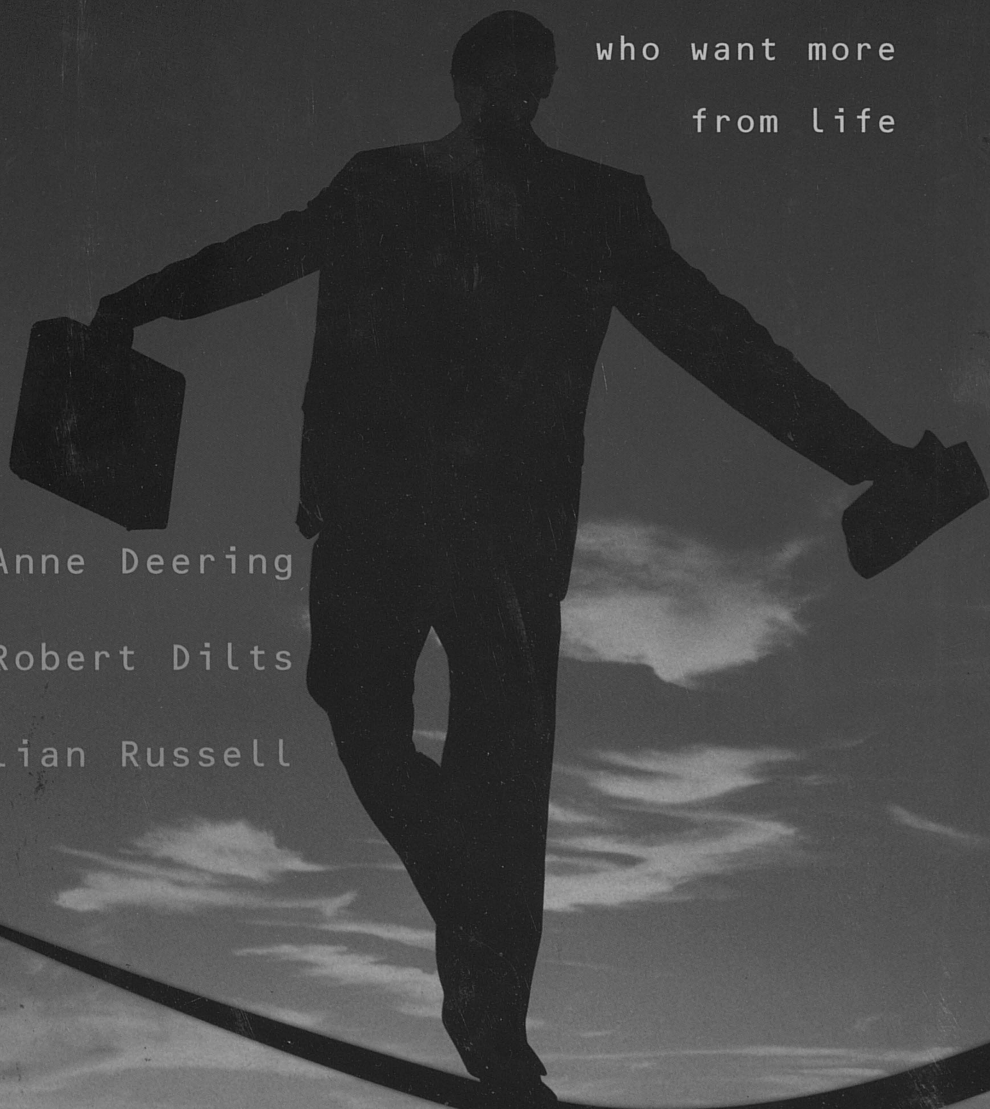


# Alpha Leadership

tools for business leaders

who want more  
from life



Anne Deering

Robert Dilts

Julian Russell

How can you be a successful leader, reduce stress and promote happiness at a time when most people are struggling to make sense of the workplace, the changing economy and a changing world?

This 'how to' book has arisen from the authors' extensive experience of leadership development in the US and Europe. Their research shows that the successful leader excels in three separate but related dimensions:

- **Anticipate:** detecting and responding to 'weak signals' to 'get ahead of the curve'
- **Align:** achieving congruence in your own values and desires and those of others
- **Act:** making things happen

Tools and frameworks are provided so that the reader can apply what they have read to their own business situation.

Each chapter is self-sufficient, with its own set of principles illustrated by stories and anecdotes, and its own set of tools designed to help you implement the principles.



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*Tools for business leaders who want more from life*

Anne Deering

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## *Why Alpha?*

Alpha has a lot of different meanings, and strikes a number of different chords for us. All resonate with what we mean by Alpha Leadership.

- The beginning
  - a starting point
  - not yet there
  - the first step of a journey
- Success
  - top of the class
  - excellence
  - achievement of goals
- Alpha rhythms of the brain
  - state of relaxed alertness
  - receptivity
  - imagination flowing freely
- Alpha male
  - leader of the pack
  - strength
  - assertiveness
- Alpha female
  - leader of the community
  - role model
  - authority
- Alpha courses
  - a spiritual awakening
  - there's more to life than this
  - rejuvenation

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## Preface

### Julian

For a number of years I have been asking myself two questions: ‘How can I help leaders appreciate the contribution their own personal development makes to increasing their value to the business?’ and ‘How can I help leaders understand that leadership presence, stature and influence are most easily enhanced at a psychological level?’

I have been on a long journey exploring these questions, and have created a small leadership coaching firm called PPD Consulting to help answer them. Two of my most significant influences along the way have been Robert Dilts and Anne Deering.

Since he was a student 20 or so years ago, Robert has been a pioneer of an applied psychology toolkit called neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). He has made NLP available to a broad range of professional audiences and, in particular, he has made it accessible to business consultants, trainers and coaches. Thanks to his pioneering work, NLP tools are now widely accepted as being essential to a business trainer’s toolkit. In short, Robert is one of the most prolific authors and thinkers I have ever met.

Anne is a vice president at the consulting firm A. T. Kearney, the firm you call in to deliver value to your business, or if you need to restructure your organization to take advantage of a new technology or a changing market. Anne works at the hard end of business consulting, and is someone who epitomizes many of the relationship management and leadership qualities spoken about in this book. She coaches leaders who are about to go into battle, or are already in the midst of it, with extraordinary sensitivity, compassion, and courage. In addition to all of this, Anne has managed the Kearney hub for intellectual capital, bringing new consulting approaches into the firm.

All three of us share a passion about integrating the ‘outer’ and the ‘inner’ dimensions of leadership. The ‘outer’ dimensions concern how you shape

and manage a business to achieve its objectives in the marketplace. The 'inner' dimensions concern how you organize yourself psychologically to be alert to your environment, to have a presence or stature that makes people want to follow you, the thinking skills to know what is important, and the influence to encourage people to give of their best.

The vigorous and enjoyable conversations that have led us to write this book have enhanced the way in which I work with leaders to integrate these dimensions. I hope this book increases your personal satisfaction and your value to your organization.

## Robert

There is a common legend in the Silicon Valley area of San Francisco, where I was born and raised, about powerful and successful businesses and business ideas that started out as scribbles on the back of a napkin over dinner and drinks. That is indeed how this book started; except that it was a paper tablecloth instead of a napkin.

Anne, Julian and I share a common passion for leadership, and the positive influence it can have on people, companies and the world. We had all been involved in leadership, including coaching business leaders, for a number of years and had established a friendship as a result of common projects and interests. On one of my trips to London a couple of years ago, we met for dinner. As we shared ideas and experiences, the vision of a leadership book began to emerge. As we talked, we made notes and sketched out key themes and ideas on the tablecloth. Each idea that we shared seemed to spark another idea, insight or 'aha', and we quickly reached one of those peak experiences of 'flow'. By the time dinner was over, we realized we had the makings of an exciting new approach to leadership that brought together both leading edge principles and pragmatic tools that could make a profound difference in the day-to-day experience of managers struggling to keep up with a changing economy and a changing world.

Determined to follow up on this initial flash of insight and enthusiasm, we continued meeting whenever we could. These periodic meetings switched to weekly international teleconferences as we approached the final stages of writing and editing.

The result is the book you are holding now. This book arose as a result of experience, passion, mutual respect, insight, shared vision, commitment

and teamwork between the authors, and these qualities are precisely what we hope the book brings into your life and into the teams and companies with which you work.

## Anne

I am 42, mother of two small boys (Sam, aged four and Ben, aged three) and a 7-month-old baby, Sophie. I am also a management consultant – a demanding job, with long hours, lots of travel and high pressure to deliver against tight deadlines.

About two years ago, the tension I had felt for a long time between work and home – between doing well in my career and actually knowing what went on at nursery school; between dedicating all my non-working hours to the children and actually having some time for myself; between doing what was right from one point of view but seemed wrong from the other – became intolerable.

Then I started working with a coach, Julian Russell. Within a few months, I felt a sense of what I can only describe as peace. I felt aligned with what was important to me, there was a greater sense of congruence in how I spent my time, and I made choices with more confidence. All of this contributed to a profound transformation of my experience of work.

Applying this thinking with my clients, I found that these lessons and approaches had a significant impact on their ability to lead complex organizations, and on their sense of fulfilment.

As Julian and I reflected on our shared experience, and then talked about it and about the changing nature of work with our friend, Robert Dilts, we set out on the journey that has culminated in this book. It is our attempt to share the models and approaches we have developed in the hope that they may also help you in your search for a more integrated and successful life.

## Acknowledgements

Two thinkers have provided the starting point for this book: Kevin Kelly with his seminal article and book, *New Rules for the New Economy*, and Margaret Wheatley with her ground-breaking *Leadership and the New Science*. Reading these texts made us start to consider what leaders should do differently to respond to the challenges they describe. We are indebted to both for their inspiration.

Many other thinkers and writers have contributed to our research, including Joel Barker, Richard Bandler, Gregory Bateson, Wayne Bukan, Ram Charan, Stephen Covey, Jim Collins, Ian Cunningham, Chris Edwards, John Grinder, Charles Hampden-Turner, Bill Isaacs, Jasper Kunde, Kelly Marks, Jerry Porras, Mel Scott and J.D. Thompson. For their creativity and generosity with their ideas, thank you.

For their energy and enthusiasm in reviewing and helping us to refine early versions of this book, many thanks to Hamish Bryce, John Higgins, Louis Scenti and David Thompson. Too many people helped us with the title for us to mention them all – you know who you are. Thank you!

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And most of all, our love and appreciation to our partners and families. Angus, Sam, Ben, Sophie, Cynthia, Anne, Martin, Anita, Andrew and Julia, for being there and helping us grow.