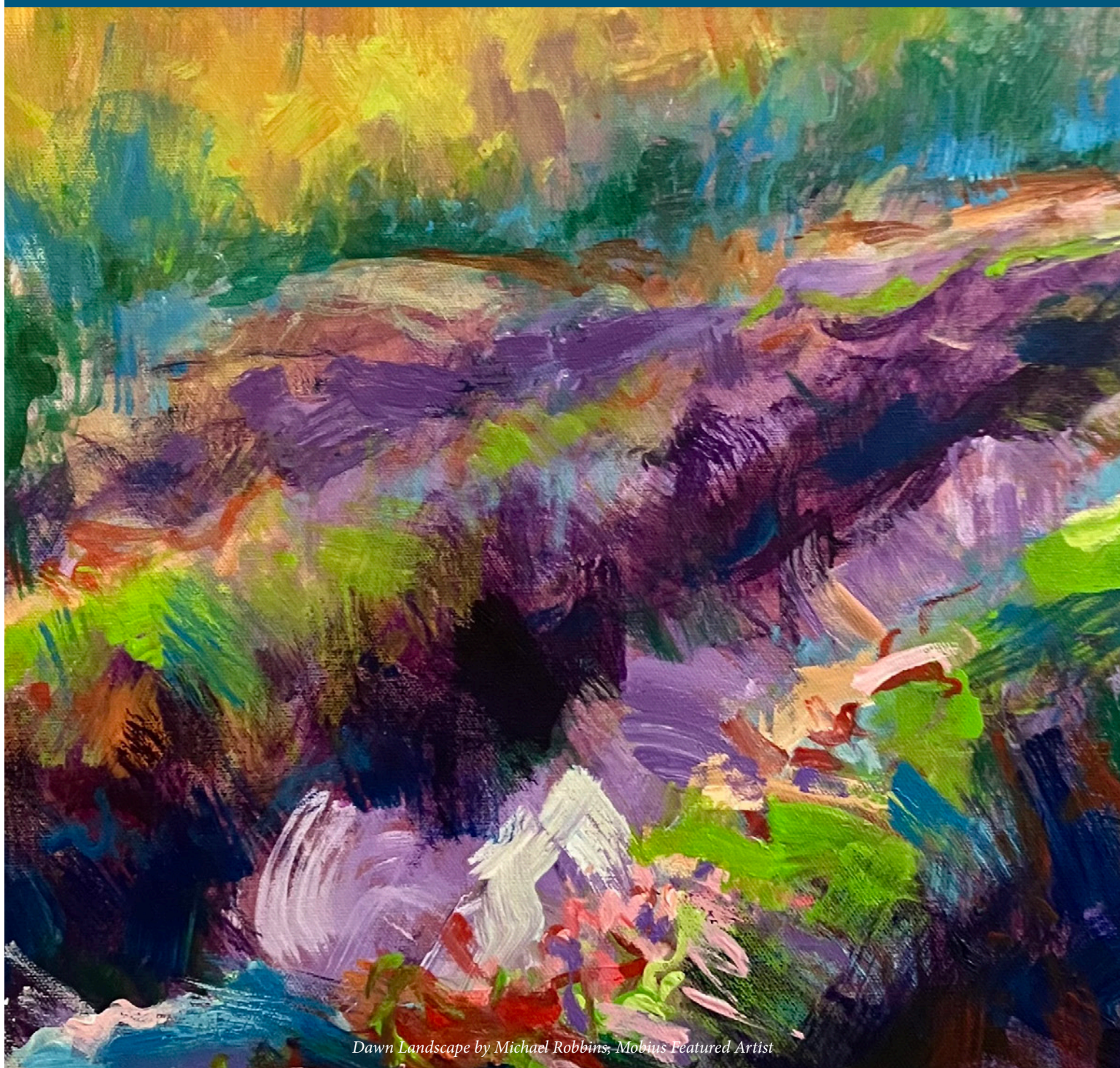


# Love and Healing in Business: A Trauma Informed Journal

Part One: 2024

BY AMY ELIZABETH FOX, MA



*Dawn Landscape by Michael Robbins, Mobius Featured Artist*

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# On Numbing

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

April 9, 2024



In my intensive leadership programs I ask executives to make a rigorous inventory of all the ways they numb themselves. I normalize it easily because these are activities to manage our raw emotions that we all partake in. In a workplace where we make big delineations between personal and “professional” and in corporate cultures that are mostly disembodied, unrelational, and ask people to be walled off from their feelings we have to engage in micro-hacks of our otherwise naturally arising feelings.

Their lists are long and often shared with a tinge of embarrassment or shame. We numb ourselves by....working too hard, working too much, spending time on social media, worrying, procrastinating, lowering ambition levels, staying alone and isolated, having shallow conversation, exercise, overeating, bingewatching Netflix... we numb ourselves by yelling at our kids, staying exhausted, caretaking others, distracting ourselves, rationalizing things, minimizing our own reactions.....

Of course there are answers they don’t always dare speak in the group and which they confide to us in hushed tones off to the side of the room.....I have affairs, I drink too much, I watch a lot of pornography...activities that break their own alignment with their values and vows and cost them in soul and self-blessing.

When they inventory the costs of this panoramic and wide spread numbing phenomenon their answers create a hush in the room: we lose vitality, creativity, closeness, attention to

what really matters to us...we are not good partners, parents, leaders....we feel empty...we pursue external validation relentlessly...we are unhappy, we don’t feel.....sigh.

“I do not know of another way to help leaders lean into their full nobility or their full possibility than to help them to un-numb their heart, and to understand why numbness is there in the first place.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

Always, executives breathe a sigh of relief just at that moment to realize they are not alone or the only one facing such consequential downsides of a collective habit.

Somehow secrets are less heavy when they are confided in a safe listener, a loving community of witnesses prepared to receive without judgement. Destructive habits receive more compassion when they are given a wider systemic context of understanding.

Sometimes, even, this conversation is the sacred beginning of a long path of recovery from an addiction that is costing them their life force and freedom. Addiction of all kinds.

Mostly it’s a sober moment where leaders start to understand that operating from an organizational culture that is performative and transactional has a huge cost in human experience and intimacy.

If we want to help leaders “unlock potential” we start by helping them with inhabiting their own hearts, tolerating their own pain and each other’s hurts, and enabling the slow steady work of un-numbing. On the other side of that melting of the heart there is an organic joy, an irresistible river of love, a pulse of imagination and dreaming...and the capacity to meet life unguarded and undefended. They smile, they laugh, they dance and they truly begin to lead the way to a new Future. ■

# On the Collective Urgency for Deep Inner Work

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of Mobius Executive Leadership

April 15, 2024




Businesses talk about the necessity of collaboration, breaking down organizational silos, and learning how to operate more effectively in matrix organizations. We argue that you cannot have true collaboration without generosity. That generosity requires moving from a false emphasis on personal resilience and autonomy to surrendering to the need for interdependence and mutuality.

There has been much discussion about the need for innovation and disruptive thinking. We would say you cannot innovate unless people are willing to and comfortable with making mistakes and failing in environments where it has been made safe to do so. This requires a mindset shift from focusing on certainty to lifting experimentation and curiosity.

When we stay curious, we shift from having crystallized opinions and being sealed off from learning to cognitive flexibility and a deep desire to expand what we know.

It is no longer uncommon to hear about the importance of adaptive leadership or change agility as people learn to deal with an increasingly changing context. We know from experience that real adaptation requires a tolerance of uncertainty, which Mobius Senior Expert Zander Grashow calls productive disequilibrium. But to tolerate being on the edge of the unknown, you must cultivate inner stillness, centeredness, and groundedness. Practices that accomplish this – meditation, contemplation,

chanting, movement, art, music – are fundamental prerequisites to large-scale change. They are not merely private habits for individual benefit.



“Practices that cultivate inner stillness are fundamental prerequisites to large-scale change. They are not merely private habits for individual benefit.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

There is also an enormous movement in the industry to address the need for greater diversity and inclusion. Many of the programs that try to address this need do so in a tactical or technical way. We would argue that to have real diversity and inclusion, you must possess a potent interest in other people's experiences and how they differ from yours. Further, you must possess a receptivity – a cultivated, committed, steady receptivity to hearing the pain of what it means to be marginalized or belong to an oppressed group. And the ability to tolerate a messy conversation that demands rigorous self-examination

and high levels of personal and collective accountability.

Finally, we might contend that you cannot have psychological safety and mental health in an organization or emotional well-being in its leadership without being sensitive to and proactively addressing the trauma that we know all people carry. Equally, we must look at the dimensions of collective trauma under the surface of an organization's history and the geographies it serves, including the violations of life and ecology in which we have colluded.

These quests—as organizations, leaders, and as a society—call for deep inner work if we have any hope of achieving the collaboration, innovation, change agility, diversity and inclusion, mental health, emotional well-being, and trauma sensitivity that we so urgently need. ■

# On Vertical Development

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

April 23, 2024




Many adults never move past an externally validated set of priorities and goals. Often in our leadership programs, we see executives who feel like they have ticked every box. They have done everything expected of them. At a certain point, they realize that a life lived from this orientation leads to a very hollow process. They start feeling lost and confused when they arrive at this threshold with unexpected emptiness.

This is a pregnant and sacred moment of life to reach, albeit unsettling. It allows people to move from responding to external benchmarks and direction to sourcing from their own deeper knowing. Adult development pioneers whose research and teaching at Harvard and beyond (whom we are grateful to count as Mobius Senior Experts: Professor Bob Kegan, Lisa Lahey, and Jennifer Garvey Berger) sometimes refer to this pivot as a move from “socialized mind” to “self-authoring mind.” In that pivot, a leader can start to lead, create, and innovate in much more powerful and authentic ways. They reference their values, motivations, passions, and practices to guide their choices and shape their contributions.

A further phase beyond that helps an executive move into what is sometimes called “self-transforming” capacities. They become more fluid in their thinking and more readily able to learn, grow, and heal. They can hold greater complexity and manage life’s inevitable paradoxes and polarities.

They move beyond an orientation to self-expression and self-satisfaction into a willingness to serve life and contribute their gifts as offerings rather than ambitions.

This very real journey of vertical development allows one to devote one’s life to something wider, something bigger, to ennoble the full possibility of human endeavor. This is sometimes called Servant Leadership and leads to much deeper satisfaction and peace.



“On entering a new phase of vertical development a leader can receive higher guidance, perceive subtle fields of information, and align their daily life choices and their broad life path with the most refined potential for supporting restoration and healing.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

We are collectively at the threshold of articulating and understanding a phase further than that. One where the perspective moves from being involved in any way with personal expression and expansion (self-centric) to becoming self-transcendent. Our interior experience becomes one of communion, of dancing with life, of emergently responding in a field of Unity and Love. Moving from this high field of coherence and indwelling, a leader can receive higher guidance, perceive subtle fields of information,

and align daily life choices and their broad life path with the most refined potential for supporting restoration and healing – from the micro-level of one’s relations, families, communities to the systemic level of a team or organization, to the macro level of the eco-systems you live in and the planet we collectively inhabit.

Try and take some time to reflect on where you are in these stages. We all hold myriad levels of development in our being. Give gratitude for the teachers, activists, healers, and mentors who have encouraged you to look within to find your voice and express your strengths, or who lifted you to a life of contribution and inspiration, or helped you to melt yourself into the wider Whole, pulsing with luminosity and magic. ■



# On Sanctuary

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

April 26, 2024



On Sanctuary, I would like to say a word about the notion of Sanctuary and its relevance for those of us in the healing arts and transformational leadership work.

When things are as chaotic and scary as they are right now, being prepared to let your heart live in hope, possibility, faith, and remembering will mean you can be a sanctuary of safety and ground for other people who will need you more and more.

As my friend Dr. Shai Tubali puts it: “Life isn’t meant to become safe, stable, and unchangeable—it is YOU who is meant to become your own sanctuary. It is in your power and hands to create an inner rock-like stability.” The implication for leadership development and change practitioners is the utter prioritization of self-care and mystical nourishment. We must constantly care for our own physical and energetic well-being to feel anchored, vibrant, and resourced.

We must consistently place ourselves in contexts and containers that invite us to look beyond the evidence of a struggling and fragile world and rest in the beauty and majesty of the blessing field. We must have a practice that helps us to avoid being consumed by immediate inputs or distracted by the news of the day. We need teachers and settings that expand our awareness and grant us a felt sense of the Divine’s imminence. We need an oscillating rhythm that moves from active engagement and acts of service to periods of contemplation, devotion, and Eros.

If we consistently fill our cup with joy and sources of creative expression and immerse ourselves in the exquisite order and diverse beauty of nature, we will keep an open heart, a resilient presence of receptivity, and the fundamental strength needed to walk purposefully towards life’s pain and darkness.

To a novice eye, self-care can appear as self-indulgent or a bypass. However, this rigorous commitment to building the vessel that can receive, witness, agitate, confront, and respond to life’s injury is an act of great importance. At this time, it is an urgent requirement for anyone who wishes to be a guardian of life.

We must build true communities to walk within and infuse them with generosity, mutuality, and intimacy. None of us can walk alone anymore. Things are too fractured, reactive, and heartbreaking.

The understanding that we must tend to our vessel, bring conscious and constant attention to our inner resourcing, and do so in the context of real interdependence with others and embedding in an eco-system of connection is the path to becoming a Sanctuary. My friends Paul Gorman and Ram Dass wrote a beautiful book years ago called *How Can I Help?* It is a classic record of acts of generous servant leadership.

Its companion question for our moment in time is: *How Can I Become a Sanctuary?*

We must seek the practices and places that will enable us to keep our hearts available, our spirits soaring, and our arms wide open to life. ■

“To a novice eye, self-care can appear as self-indulgent or a bypass. However, this rigorous commitment to building the vessel that can receive, witness, agitate, confront, and respond to life’s injury is an act of great importance. At this time, it is an urgent requirement for anyone who wishes to be a guardian of life.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX



# On Dancing

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

May 1, 2024



In psychological perspectives on vertical development, we often point to shadow work or the need to integrate and address longitudinal aftereffects of family and collective trauma. I am a huge proponent of this in my work and our offerings at Mobius Executive Leadership. In spiritual circles discussing vertical development, we often highlight the need for placing one's journey in the wider context of the world, the natural environment, the generations of life, and the presence of the numinous. I believe strongly in the importance of this transpersonal perspective and transcendent experiences. However, I want to highlight here the importance of beauty and joy.

**Plain everyday beauty:** Going to a farmer's market. Caring for a sick family member. Preparing a community gathering. Repairing a beloved piece of furniture. Attending a prayer service. Walking in your neighborhood. An intimate conversation.

**Contemplative beauty:** reading a poem, sitting by the ocean, listening to music, lighting candles, reciting a prayer, or laying a wreath at a grave.

**Rewiring World Beauty:** Protesting. Offering shelter to a refugee. Thinking in dissidence. Conscientious disobedience. Tithing your income. Speaking your mind.

Too often leadership programs underestimate the creative fire that is art, beauty and closeness as seeds for the expression of unbridled joy. Joy is the deepest invoker of possibility, novelty, vitality, intimacy, and hope. In my sister Erica Ariel Fox's *Winning from Within*®

methodology, joy is the emotional gateway of the Dreamer archetype.

In our programs when we give people permission to tap into their intuition, tap their natural passions, revisit their earliest true longings and find their sources of playfulness, lightness of heart and desire to give, create, manifest, and dance with life, they literally start to do that.

“Too often leadership programs underestimate the creative fire that is art, beauty and closeness as seeds for the expression of unbridled joy. Joy is the deepest invoker of possibility, novelty, vitality, intimacy, and hope.”

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They start to write poems for the first time in twenty years, to send love letters to their families, to forgive long-standing grudges, to sing aloud the lullabies they usually reserve for their children, to paint, to breathe anew, and to dance. They dance at first with self-consciousness, then with self-expression, then with exuberance, and eventually with self-abandon that hints at their true unfiltered rhythm and restores the life force within that

wants to pulse, pound, and move.

As practitioners, we need to hold the intention for leadership interventions to be pathways to this kind of happiness and these sources of meaning and self-expression.

We must help organizations become havens of artistry and homes for wildness and wonder.

To re-welcome the sound of the great YAWP. I believe that welcoming this quality of connection and the concurrent re-kindling of awe that it beckons will be an engine of innovation and belonging. Perhaps joy is an untapped antidote to the restlessness, disengagement, and ennui that currently permeates the organizational fabric we live within. ■

# On Taking the Time

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

May 8, 2024



One of the biggest obstacles to leadership development is the perceived time paucity that companies live within and the extraordinary sense of rush, busyness, and overextension executives are experiencing.

Very recently, clients have hesitated to take people out of the workplace for more than a half day or a one-day process.

This is the equivalent of saying you can go on a long spiritual journey by doing a weekend workshop. It just doesn't work that way. Only with the premise that you learn by ideas and hearing frameworks offered in PowerPoint presentations would you believe you can speed up a process that is actually learning by metabolism. Our experiential and restorative work is learning by seeping and soaking in a field in which you have the rare opportunity to free yourself from long-grooved and well-worn habits. That process takes time. It takes reflection. It takes a community of learners willing to experiment with interacting in unfamiliar and liberatory ways with one another. It takes whitespace, silence, and stillness.

This spaciousness is the pre-requisite for cultivating wisdom and accessing the unconscious storehouse that carries your most buried and disowned memories, emotions, and fears. If we want to see governments, organizations, or society start making wiser choices, we will have to tolerate the slowing down required to mature and heal ourselves.

We must insist that breaking free of our most constraining beliefs, integrating and tending to our life-shaping hurts and harms and their aftermath, and reigniting the natural movements and life-enhancing connection with our Soul is the most important investment of time any company can make.

“Consider where you collude to not take time for what really matters, to commoditize your soul journey into bite-size investments of energy, and to distract from the lyricism of beauty and volcano of potency that could become your life unleashed or your organization in its full vitality and promise.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

To do otherwise misses the profoundly moving opportunity to turn partners from strangers to colleagues to friends. Watching partners in a firm or team members in a company give themselves the gift of journeying together to their own personal depths and their mutual purpose is a privilege that touches the heart each and every time. You are in the presence of a long-awaited moment in which life returns to

each one. That intimacy and solidarity will equip them to meet challenges as a unified whole hereafter.

Consider where you also collude to not take time for what really matters, to commoditize your soul journey into bite-size investments of energy, and to distract from the lyricism of beauty and volcano of potency that could become your life unleashed or your organization in its full vitality and promise.

My hope is that as practitioners, we won't accept this assumed time impossibility as a given but rather see the negotiation over the time footprint of such a session as part of the confrontation with a lack of organizational health that is indeed part of the medicine that we can offer.

We must take the time because the time is Now. ■



# On Inner Change

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

May 15, 2024



As organizations grapple with an increasingly volatile and ambiguous world, leaders will be required to befriend the unknown, the emergent, and the constantly novel. The historic primacy of intellectual acumen and technical skill sets in the world of business will be insufficient to meet the demands of this adaptive environment.

A lot is being written about the transformational capacities that will be required: psychological safety, intuition, collective intelligence, inclusion, sense-making, etc. All of that is true and meaningfully so.

The deeper call, however, is a spiritual one.

We are being asked to befriend the Mystery. A thing very few of us have been equipped to do.

For this, we must cultivate qualities such as surrender, transformation, and faith.

In a context in which so much is unpredictable and cause and effect are intricate webs of interrelated events and relationships, we will have to let go of a certain amount of control.

Out of this intense communion and saturation, there will be a natural arising of instincts, orientation, and guidance on what needs attention, what is ripe for action, and where risk lurks.

As the world changes, we will need to be fast learners, capable of swiftly letting go of antiquated ways of being and acting, and willing to mature our perspectives, ideas, understandings, and habits of relating.

We will need to become capable of being a fluid, changing creature.

We are being asked to constantly grow into new ways of expressing, contributing, and interpreting reality. We will need to meet the world in such an openhearted and receptive way that we allow the Book of Life to genuinely evolve and mature our inner landscape. We will need to become capable of a quicksilver response to an emergency or crisis and able to morph our way of being moment by moment as required by the changing context around us. Reliably, tomorrow will not look like today.

That brings us to faith.

If we allow the swirl of events or the intensity of the movement of life to overwhelm us or contract our confidence in the future, we

will get paralyzed and stagnant.

However, if we can trust in the unfolding of life's intricate order and offer ourselves fiercely and generously to it, then we can dance with this generative time.

The ability to remain "calm amid chaos" comes from a deep grounding in Source and an abiding faith in the ultimate possible goodness.

Ultimately, our spiritual capacities ... capacities of consciousness and awareness, will be the sustenance leaders will draw on to guide us through, wave on wave, as we navigate the unprecedented challenges already upon us. ■



# On The Shadow

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

May 23, 2024



This morning, I am reflecting on how much of life's hurt, pain, and shadow (personal, family, ancestral, and collective) we each and together turn away from.

So often, when we do the screening interviews ahead of our deeper trauma-informed programs, people will report they had a “wonderful” childhood without anything they consider traumatic. Sometimes, when our practitioners review the range of incidents, experiences, and omissions that would potentially lead to deep hurt, people have an immediate insight that they have not yet reflected on how those things might have impacted them.

- The lack of affection and intimacy in a family.
- A parent who worked all the time and was largely absent.
- A too intrusive and narcissistic caretaker.
- Moving constantly with little sense of stability, place or Home.
- Going to boarding school very young.
- Forced migration.
- Bullying.

- Poverty.
- War.
- Addiction in the home.
- Corporal punishment at school.
- Illness.
- Enmeshed or estranged emotional expression in their early families.
- Undiscussed hardships or family challenges.
- Estrangement within the family. Broken ties, long-held resentments.
- Racism.
- Colonialism.
- Pressure to perform.
- Premature responsibility and caretaking responsibilities.
- Unpredictable moods at home.
- And on and on and on.

And for some people far more simple daily incidents create an internal sense of overwhelm and emotional flooding.

>>

“When a leader’s trauma is unaddressed, they will operate daily from a regressive and reactive mode and find it hard to express emotions and create loving workplaces. Further, they will limit the role of intuition and imagination in their companies by the ceiling of their shut hearts.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

For others, the hurt goes back a generation or two and lived in their childhoods as their parents lack of emotional expression, nurturing, attunement, overt caring and cherishing, or volatile moods that create a sense of dread and unpredictability or enmeshment and intrusion.


I have met hardly any executives over the last twenty years whose inner life, armor, and interpersonal habits, whose aspiration levels, and leadership styles were not meaningfully influenced by the profound aftermath of these unprocessed adverse events in their developmental stage of life.

It is important that as teachers, healers, therapists, and coaches, we start to talk about the enormity of the influence early childhood events have on how organizations function. Unaddressed, the aftermath of these traumas will constantly affect how leaders

experience their inner world and perceive others through the lens of their own projective field.

They will operate daily from a regressive and reactive mode and find it hard to express emotions and create loving workplaces. Further, they will limit the role of intuition and imagination in their companies by the ceiling of their shut hearts.

The wonderful news is that we have learned a great deal in the last twenty years about how to create safe, profound, vertical development offerings for people that allow them a moment when they can stop turning away and turn towards themselves. Open their hearts, tell their stories, re-inhabit their bodies, encounter and meaningfully care for team members at a far more authentic level, and unlock all the life force that is stifled in the effort to keep the pain suppressed. ■



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AMY ELIZABETH FOX



# On The Polycrisis

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

May 29, 2024



I have been thinking about how we begin to understand the impact of the polycrisis on our emotional landscape. Years ago, I landed at Logan Airport and noticed a magazine with a cover picture of a polar bear on a shrinking iceberg looking terrified. I fell to a chair, sobbing. I realized later that this kind of ecological crisis and species depletion is an unnatural grief, one we are not meant to know how to hold.

Much that is happening in the world right now is of that kind of “unthinkable” or “un-feel-able” nature. We do not know how to hold it or stay open in the face of it.

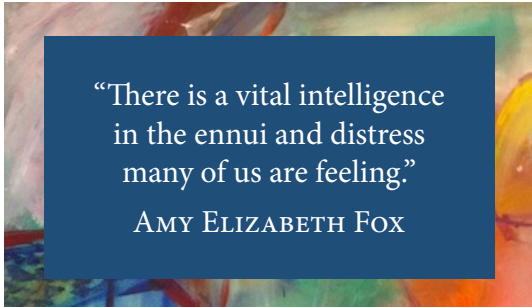
Of course, we have already seen generation on generation of atrocity, violence, and abuse that has caused such universal numbness and disassociation. This moment is different, however.

It is a compound crisis that endangers life on the planet itself and many feel the existential threat geopolitically as well.

My teacher Thomas Hübl, PhD created a beautiful collective practice, global social witnessing, that expands our ability to stay present with this level of suffering.

It is our shared responsibility to widen our capacity to witness and receive others’ pain, especially as we aspire to the work of restoration and healing collective trauma. We must get stronger to bear the pain, grief, rage, and details of the generations of trauma and violence that have been inflicted and in which, sadly, we are all complicit.

The world context is now actively looming in our consciousness with daily dread, uncertainty, fear, and loss of control. Our unconscious mind is already in relation to possible scenarios of social decay, collapse, and ecological loss.



“There is a vital intelligence  
in the ennui and distress  
many of us are feeling.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

I worry that this can get relegated to personal anxiety and that this will be met with a readiness to treat that rising response that could otherwise call us to attention as if it is an individual problem to be treated with medication or a sabbatical or some other near-term “fix.”

We, as healers, need to be diligent in differentiating between what belongs to personal process work and where personal breakdown mirrors wider systemic and relational dysfunction that point to a need for wider, collective remedies.

There is a vital intelligence in the ennui and distress many of us are feeling.

We are starting to see essays and commentary on the policy implications and political dynamics of the polycrisis. I hope to start a shared reflection on the emotional dimension of living in such an inflection point. We know that movements of hope, love, and healing are essential. Paying attention to discern what is happening to respond as activists and agitators is required.

We also need to start discussing the toll it is taking on our hearts, our quality of attention, relational strain, and our sense of ground. Acts of self-care and self-kindness will become ever more important, and communal spaces for co-regulation and mutual compassion will become life-saving. ■

# On Interdependence

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

June 5, 2024



We are starved for a vocabulary of interdependence. Our organizations place such an emphasis on independence and “resilience” that we don’t celebrate or reinforce the equally essential leadership capacity of cultivating belonging and mutual caring in the workplace.

In our leadership programs, we talk about the vital language of relational needs. Requests and offers one could make not for problem-solving and ideation but for emotional support.

Participants typically come up with two ideas: someone could listen to me or hug me. That is almost always their entire repertoire of ideas on this topic.

Slowly the group starts to understand that there are many, many ways others might nurture their heart: to witness your story, share your life’s wisdom, recognize your growth, cook for you, walk in nature with you, grieve with you, pray with you, dance with you, bring you an unexpected gift, teach you something, accept your amends and forgive you, invite you somewhere special to you, confide in you. And on and on...

Then, there is a tremendously poignant moment when someone has the courage, looking at a list of dozens of such relational moves, to admit that they don’t know anyone in their life who could ask for this kind of emotional support. The entire room stops breathing for a moment because it’s so widely true. We have lost the relational fabric and impulse for generosity in companies built on numbness, workaholicism, and productivity. Being trauma-informed as a coach or facilitator means

advocating for healing in organizational life and the possibility of genuine connection in daily work.

It also means role modeling a wide open heart that will spontaneously make offers of kindness to other people and an orientation and capacity to place one’s attention on other people for an extended period of time to serve as witness to their life’s unfolding.

After a week-long program of deep self-exploration, it is very touching to watch the natural emergence of emotional care return in the group.

This quality of love expresses itself in many ways: Through sitting close together, offering gestures of comfort, words of counsel and wisdom exchanged, candid and meaningful feedback offered, sharing raw and real stories with one another, time walking in

silence, and a quality of safety and unconditional acceptance that is mature in nature, having had a chance to really get to know each other’s true nature and real-life story. This group field now has a greater coherence and wide-healing capacity that unleashes spontaneity, joy, and playfulness.

Our work has the chance to revitalize the fabric of belonging in society by helping teams and organizations rewire attuned relationships, emotional intelligence, and a potent exchange of support.

It truly does take a village.

Let us, more and more, become such a refuge place for one another. ■



# On Time Mastery

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

June 19, 2024



We have lost touch with the myriad dimensions of time that give life its potency, meaning, and blessing.

We tell ourselves we are deeply out of sorts, but really, we are profoundly out of synch. We are not synchronized with our place in the world, our place in time, and our place in our lineage.

**The first kind of time worthy of consideration is ancestral time.**

We do not honor our elders. We do not know the stories of earlier generations, often not even their names. We do not turn towards ancestral trauma and offer ourselves as beacons of restoration. We do not honor their lives, their pains, their sacrifices. We do not consciously inhabit their gifts and legacies.

In our programs, executives tell the story of their leadership values starting two generations back. All of a sudden, their own story becomes so much more dimensional. You get cultural color, stories of immigration, and delayed dreams. You begin to understand the atrocities our ancestors faced and whose long tail we inherited in parental coldness, fear, and fierce ambition for our safety and success. You can see leaders start to inhabit themselves when they place themselves in the long line of their family descendants.

**The second kind of time is Presence.**

Most of the executives we meet are outside of themselves. Decades ago, my friend Ram Dass wrote the spiritual masterpiece *Be Here Now*. This sage imperative has never been more important than in a time of massive distraction, endless stimulation, constant flux, and tireless communication.

“We have lost touch with the myriad dimensions of time that give life its potency, meaning, and blessing.”

AMY ELIZABETH FOX

In our programs, we help leaders to slow down and take space for reflection. We enter gossamer silence to source self-connection. We listen to the sounds of nature. We hold deep conversation. We paint. We sing. We dance. We walk. We do Aikido. We breathe.

As leaders re-inhabit themselves, you see their own spark of life take hold again. Counter-intuitively, going back to integrate early childhood hurts from the past brings more of your own immediacy online into the present time as well.

**The final missing dimension of time is Eternal time.**

What the Greeks called Kairos.

We touch this liminal space when we pray. When we meditate. When we create sacred rituals of commemoration and transition. When we enter the domain of the artistic. When we witness one another profoundly.

All of this connects us to the numinous, the wider field in which all of life unfolds itself.

Only in eternal time can we really source the appropriate compass for our choices and source the meaning of our lives, both our vocation and our loves.

My teacher Thomas Hübl, PhD links these three types of time together in his beautiful teaching: Only when you are at perfect peace with your past can you virgin birth the part of the Future you came into life to give.

We can help people seek and find greater peace with their own past and do ancestral healing, which gives peace to the entire Line. This unburdens the future, bringing a portal of Hope and fresh possibility. ■



# On Revelations

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

June 26, 2024



There are myriad forms of revelation that are relevant to our work as coaches and transformational facilitators.


The first is where we elect, within appropriately calibrated boundaries and with only the intention of inspiring or activating our clients, **to reveal dimensions of our own inner life and experiences**, in solidarity to their courage, opening and expansion.

The second is where we become **the field in which they allow their unconscious mind to reveal stories, memories, sensations, long buried fears and hurts** so that, in our witness, these may unfold for healing and integration.

The third is where **their strengths and life purpose begin to call them**, revealing a path ahead and an opportunity for evolution or contribution that was heretofore invisible to their view. This last kind of revelation can be galvanizing and life changing when a client can be encouraged to receive and revere it as guidance.

Of course in group process there is the unfolding of revelatory conversations between members and the surfacing of shared themes. As coherence builds there is the wondrous revelation of the miracle field in which synchronicities and blessings start to present themselves including: Unexpected resources that one needs and another has to offer; “coincidences”; themes that touch many in the group as profound in their own lives; and a soft delicate mist of love that spreads

underneath the overt action in the room and everyone’s hearts. In this level of shared revelation, each person’s vulnerability and generosity of spirit inspires the others into what is safe and what is possible and places them closer and immediate touch with their own longing for community.



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AMY ELIZABETH FOX

The final dimension of revelation is more of a mystical thing. It cannot be summoned on command or taken for granted. The presence of this type is **an act of Grace** each time it occurs. It often reveals itself as the downloading of new and glistening intelligence from outside of space and time into the room. Like a window opening to Source. Such a moment is elevating in the heart and thrilling to the Soul, even as it is expansive to the entire field of potential for the

individuals and the collective in parallel. These are essential moments. They are riveting and quickening. They come at unexpected junctures of ripeness and readiness.

As facilitators we can beckon them, welcome them, and invoke them. We can recognize them, yield to them and harvest them. We can refine ourselves to be more likely conduits to their arrival by becoming ever greater beacons of open-heartedness.

To give people a felt-sense of the indwelling Presence of Source reminds us all of the pervasive nature of Love, helps us to taste the Eternal, and calls us back to deeper Faith. Such moments remind of us of the relative smallness and paradoxically infinite preciousness of our human life and invites us all to ask questions of how to serve and how to be a balm for those around us. ■

# On Defenses

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

July 3, 2024



All our defenses are strategies which represent the continuation of protective mechanisms that were the highest possible self-protective response to challenging situations earlier in our life.

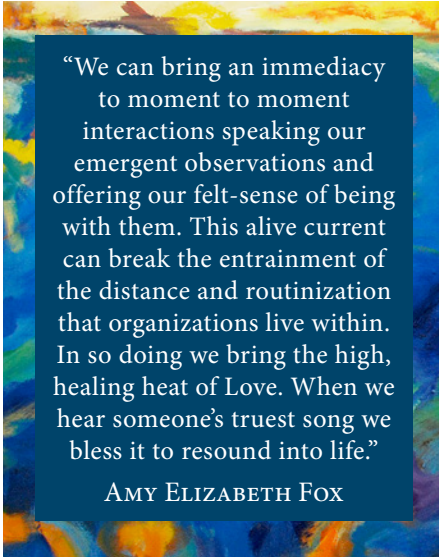
As practitioners our primary mandate is to respond with skillful means to these defenses which includes, but is not limited to, understanding the intrinsic wisdom and functionality of that which can look like derailers later in life; offering the executive an environment in which they are seen and reflected in the wholeness that awaits underneath these acts of hiding and shielding and deflecting; and to offer such unconditional love to leaders that their need for these protective habits systematically melts and heals.

That requires us, first and foremost, not to personalize any acts of resistance, defiance, cynicism or stuckness. Our sense of our own efficacy and inner meaning-making cannot be in any way based on how we are received or how immediately and overtly our invitations and interventions appear to be.

It also means we learn to embody a calibrated rhythm that can refine and modify our interactive style, degree of confrontation versus nurturing and oscillate in levels of depth informed by the immediate data, signals and presence of the executive or group in front of us.

We also need a sophisticated understanding of all the myriad ways that such self-protection shows up intra-personally in hacks to self-contact.

We can bring an immediacy to moment to moment interactions speaking our emergent observations and offering our felt-sense of being with them. This alive current can break the entrainment of the distance and routinization that



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organizations live within. In so doing we bring the high, healing heat of Love. When we hear someone’s truest song we bless it to resound into life.

Such a lexicon includes: distraction, addiction, numbness and busyness in executive lifestyle. In the relational domain we might notice that conversations take place in levels of abstraction, constant generalizations. We might hear extrapolations that too swiftly universalize immediate experiences; mentalization; profound experiences being described trivially; disembodiment and speed in which meaningful comments are made without breathe, contact or intimacy, and uni-directional communication in which they are delivering messages

outwardly but may in no way seem receptive to input, avoiding listening to be touched.

We have many tools to help offer the alchemical restoration to these interactive habits embedded in modern corporate culture: Precision of perception and commentary; attunement; mutuality; deep Listening; slowness and spaciousness; presence; our own self-expression; vulnerability and extending vast kindness. We also gift, with patience, our capacity for, and invitation to, higher valence emotional expression.

Most acutely we can bring an immediacy to moment to moment interactions speaking our emergent observations and offering our felt-sense of being with them. This alive current can break the entrainment of the distance and routinization that organizations live within. In so doing we bring the high, healing heat of Love. When we hear someone’s truest song we bless it to resound into life. ■

# On The Original Bargain

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

July 17, 2024



The “original bargain”. This is what my teacher Patrick Connor calls the tacit agreement we each make to see ourselves through the eyes of our early caregivers. Of course, virtually all of our parents and guardians will not have had a chance to do their own trauma healing. The implication of that, therefore, is that our self-image (in loyalty and fidelity to them) will be shaped by their pain and their karma and their inability to see us clearly. That means we wind up imbibing their criticism, believing and internalizing their subtle hints to make ourselves smaller and their reflections that shape our self-esteem in distorting and damaging ways.

Executives come into leadership programs with a cloak over this internal war against themselves. They only slowly come to understand the harshness and brutality of their inner conversation. Most of us make ourselves wrong all day long in the quiet recesses of our interiority. We suffer mistakes, we punish failure, and we put ceilings on our greatness and luminosity and courage in the hopes of keeping ourselves in some safe zone and not taking up too much space.

My teacher Thomas Hübl, PhD has a beautiful definition of humility that I love. It is refusing to occupy the right size that life asks of you. Not playing small and certainly not acting grandiose. Just a willingness to occupy your natural space and gifts.

Instead, We make ourselves into self-improvement projects, diabolically delaying self-approval to the next goal post and on that achievement we get a momentary

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reprieve until we set our sights on the next benchmark that we tell ourselves will bring self-acceptance and relief.

Truly, only attending to the inner life and undertaking the meticulous unwinding of this earliest, pre-verbal dimension of our psyche’s agreements can be the liberating force that allows us to rest in self-blessing, self-love and real peace.

When we can start to see how these dynamics operate under the radar screen all the time and listen deeply enough to discern these overly critical voices we can begin to accept them, integrate them, and let them go. I believe this interior dynamic is a

critical leadership challenge because this self-talk occupies the same space in our mind as would otherwise be free for intuition, emotional attunement, imagination, sensitivity and care.

In recent decades much has begun to be spoken in the personal growth field about shame. John Bradshaw. Brené Brown. Most recently my friend Rosi Greenberg’s wonderful book *Everyone Has A Sam*.

It is time to take shame and self-acceptance into the leadership canon. We cannot overlook this driving force any longer. Coaches know this. They find this dynamic lurking in even the most successful and potent leaders on the planet. A much younger part still striving to be good enough and privately concerned that they are not. We can and must extend each other a loving hand out of this morass to take up the global challenges we now face. ■



# On The Soul Void

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

July 24, 2024



I am just heading into the final day of one of the five day immersive leadership programs I have the privilege to guide. It has once again been stunning to witness as leaders find the most neglected and abandoned parts of their hurt psyche and bring back on line their innate beauty, aliveness, capacity to care and deep and reliable desire to serve life.

Watching the inevitable metamorphosis of leaders from the exhausted and narrowed executives who arrive at the beginning of the week to the intimate group of loving friends that will leave Lisbon later today one cannot help but wonder why we are choosing to live our lives in soul suffocation.

Day in and day out we relegate ourselves to our intellect as our primary source of intelligence, live inside routinized superficial conversation as our default mode, over give and overwork to the point that we are in low grade exhaustion all the time and actively neglecting the juicy and joyful dimensions of life so that we experience ourselves as listless, empty, lonely and fundamentally unhappy.

When leadership programs can offer a fresh ignition to the natural life force being squashed out by organizational and societal architecture and make a potent invitation for the Soul to re-emerge it suddenly feels like magic is happening. In these programs leaders unplug from the demands of daily routine and responsibility, take down their shields to have intimate dialogue with one another, turn the focus

to their own emotional needs and spiritual longings and give each other permission to dream big again. Most importantly, they go back for the unconscious aspects of their leadership motivations and habits that are shaped in early life. They retrieve a connection to what is called in psychological circles their “inner child” and undertake a sacred reunion with their most essential selves. There is for many of them a fresh insight that the derailers, fears and stuck patterns they find themselves caught in are sourced in the early childhood hurts from which they look away.

This “soul retrieval” process brings back an innocence previously covered over by cynicism and doubt; a creativity previously covered over by metallization and ruthless exertion; a caring for others previously covered over by self-protection and deep mis-trust and a sense of self-worth and self-blessing that was overcome until now by shame and a lack of mirroring.

One cannot overstate the degree to which our social agreements, shaped by generations of untreated trauma, keep all of us unnecessarily numb, defeated, and outrageously compromising what matters most to our hearts and spirit. If organizations are willing to risk and invest in true transformation of leaders then these same organizations can become a wild catalyst for a new world. One made whole by workplaces where everyone dares to be bold, aspires to be generous and connected, yearns to contribute, and welcomes the uniqueness of each employee. ■

# A Plea

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

July 31, 2024



The recent suicide of a prominent CEO has moved me to trembling. I am hoping that we can no longer avoid the urgent need for trauma healing in the domain of organizational development and leadership cultivation. Without that we are at ongoing risk of sustaining further tragedies.

The pressure, pace, and loneliness of leadership roles exacerbates early childhood hurts and leaves executives trapped behind the walls of childhood survival strategies and enacting numbing behaviors.

Our false split between the personal and the “professional” insists they hold their pain alone and has them numbing themselves and isolating.

Leaders in my sessions report they don’t know where to bring their fears, their shakiness, their overwhelm, their grief. When we make an inventory of emotional and relational needs they assess they have only a few people, if at all, that they could ask for help.

Equally these same leaders enter the work place with generations of untreated trauma in their life stories and are often drawn to excel achieve and over exert because they were required to take heroic roles in their childhoods and sought refuge in chaotic family systems by becoming the source of order, caretaking, mediation and hope.

This is a recipe for dysfunction, reactivity and risk. As in this tragic context this has sometimes heart breaking consequences.

We can and we must reverse these trends and create leadership programs that offer refuge for true healing.

These once in a lifetime contexts allow the much needed pause, an exhale and a down regulation of an over stressed nervous system. They allow rest and renewal. They hack the silence of the unspoken pain and overwhelm. They allow a turning inwards that affords embodied and emotional integration. This new sense of being able to inhabit one’s life and one’s true purpose in turn returns one’s dignity and faith.

Work places and colleagues can be harbors of caring and nurturing.

Leaders can share their own inner journey to inspire others to mutual vulnerability and tenderness. Team members can support and accompany one another through the business challenges they face together and the hardships that life inevitably brings.

Someday this will become the definition of organizational thriving.

Let your heart break as you read of the poignant loss of this great light below and pledge yourself to the journey of leadership restoration. If enough of us hold the conviction that loving business is possible and that inviting connection and true belonging in the work place is imminent it will become so.

Let’s hold one another before we lose one another. ■

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# On Trauma-Informed Coaching

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

September 18, 2024



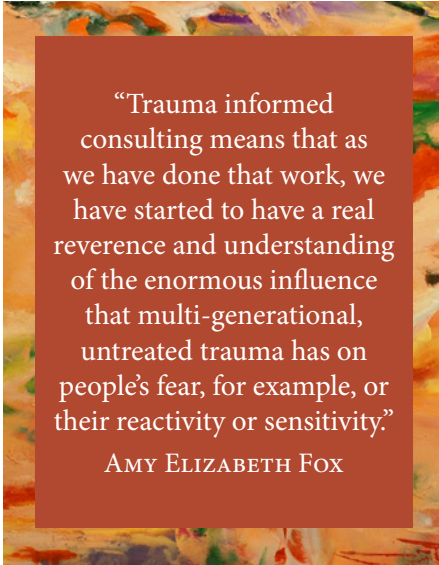
Seminal thought leaders over the last years have pointed to the degree to which our mindset shapes what we perceive and how we interpret what we perceive – the meaning-making that we do. The most potent object of intervention is that perception.

If you wanted to change someone's behavior, it isn't effective or sustainable to say, I think it would be better if you replace behavior A with behavior B. You have to understand the underlying loyalties, assumptions emotions, needs that were driving or shaping behavior A to seem the optimal behavior to begin with. As you help people integrate the less functional dimensions of their habits, then a new behavior becomes the natural arising choice.

A different way of saying this is that for the last twenty-five years, change practitioners have been doing work that is directed at some of the deeper, unconscious terrain that shapes our actions and experience of the world. There has also been a very strong move inside the world of coaching towards ontology and neurobiology and somatics. All of this starts to lead us to really thinking about the leader's deeper patterns and perceptions as the focus of intervention.

Trauma informed consulting means that as we have done that work, we have started to have a real reverence and understanding of the enormous influence that multi-generational, untreated trauma has on people's fear, for example, or their reactivity or sensitivity.

In preparing for a deeper leadership program, we do a trauma screening – a trauma interview for participants joining these immersive programs. In doing that I've come



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to understand that there is hardly anybody whose life hasn't been touched, if not in their own personal life narrative, then in the generations before them, their parents' life narrative, their grandparents' life narrative, by significant hardship, by things that are hard to integrate, hard to metabolize emotionally. What that means is that unprocessed emotion, unprocessed memory, continues to walk with a leader as unconscious habits and unconscious beliefs and in some cases, inner vows.

For example, I won't be like my father, who was abusive. If you choose to disown anger or the warrior, the strength and power that comes from a certain kind of ferocity because you saw it abused in your childhood, then

it gets very hard to really be effective as a leader, guiding others, inspiring others, directing others, because you don't have access to that life vitality or life force. You could say to somebody, you should make more ambitious goals, or you should have more bold leadership style, but if there is a deep agreement inside their psyche not to do that, then the advice will fall hollow.

More and more, coaches and leadership development professionals realize that at the very least, we need to understand the deep roots of these derailers, the deep antecedents to why people are behaving in ways that don't serve them. If you can go an extra step and be an agent of helping leaders to look at and metabolize trauma properly, that is even better. What I mean by trauma informed, or what my teacher, Thomas Hübl, PhD, and I mean by that is, at the very least, you understand how to see the presenting problem in its depths. ■



## On The Leader As A Parentified Child

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

September 25, 2024



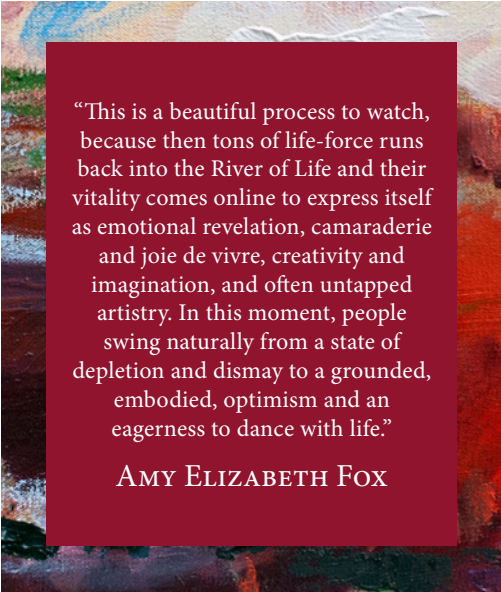
So many leaders, early in their lives, were put into roles that were precocious to their age. Many leaders had a role in their family as a sort of a hero, the rescuer, or caretaker of the family's wellbeing. In that role these children became hyper responsible. They became used to being really effective, especially in handling chaos.

These children got used to being in charge, often from very young age, which is heartbreaking in terms of the dimensions of their childhood that they missed. But that child naturally grows up to lead others, direct the action around them and excels at getting stuff done. Their effectiveness gets rewarded. Achievement and contribution begin to matter more than more natural ways of being and the qualities of self-expression and joy.

That pattern of external referencing and validation and going to the next goal post gets very entrenched, and this propulsion to succeed can be wonderful. Often in our programs, we have some of the most "successful" people on the planet.

However, at some point in the life cycle of their leadership, they are going to hit a wall where reaching yet another accolade or another appointment or another raise, another piece of security, fails to satisfy.

That is an extremely pregnant moment. Suddenly, in adult development terms, these leaders have the potential to move from a socialized mind (where your choices are informed by what society commends) to an internally



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referenced self-authoring mindset in which they can choose from deep inside their own values, their own sense of purpose, their own calling, what they want to do and how they want to contribute. This is a beautiful process to watch, because then tons of life-force runs back into the River of Life and their vitality comes online to express itself as emotional revelation, camaraderie and joie de vivre, creativity and imagination, and often untapped artistry. In this moment, people swing naturally from a state of depletion and dismay to a grounded, embodied, optimism and an eagerness to dance with life.

Other family roles also play out as interpersonal habits or top team dynamics: An executive breaking tension through humor and deflection (what is sometimes called the mascot), a leader who gets blamed when things go wrong or isolated for being the only one voicing oppositional perspectives (scapegoat) or disappearing during conflict or difficult conversations (lost child). At its heart, vertical development seeks to release each of us from the childhood roles, cognitive schemas and emotional pain we carry so that a deeper, self-propelling, organic, developmental river can run again.

Until that profound shift is nourished – by taking time for healing and love to act as a balm and providing the containers in which transformation takes place – the most we can hope for are temporary and relatively superficial changes that won't touch the heart or unlock a person's true potential. ■

# On Leading in Complexity

by Amy Elizabeth Fox, Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

October 2, 2024



There are some emerging trends post pandemic that were always there but now have more of the foreground of leaders' attention.

The first one is the level of complexity people are facing and the increasing pace of change.

Almost always, on an opening night of our leadership programs, if you have a group full of senior executives, they will talk about the disruption of AI, the disruption of the multi-generations in the workforce, the level of transformation and churn that is going on inside their organizations, and how people find themselves change-challenged. They fret over change resistance, a slow pace of adaptation and the lack of change agility in their teams and organizational culture.

My dear friend Zander Grashow, a Mobius Senior Expert, is a thought leader on adaptive leadership. He often comments that people don't resist change per se. Rather they are defensive because they are afraid of the perceived loss they attribute to the change. So, one of the things I try to think about is, how can leaders tell a story of change in the context of conservation, of what is being preserved, what is being valued, what in the history, is being honored? This dual approach of holding what is important to safeguard in a company's history, leadership, mission and story in tandem to what needs to be let go of, transformed, re-invented leaves people feeling a safer ground from which to embrace the change process.

Systemic constellation principles suggest the importance of this facet of the change process as well. In the context of respecting the systemic principles of order, reciprocity and belonging...a bowing to the Order and the values and the history that has come before.... then leaders have a context in which their psyche can relax and feel that there is a stream of continuity that sits alongside the stream of change.

Further, as my friend Scott J. Allen, Ph.D. remarked, if the leader is the weather, how can we make sure there aren't storm clouds everywhere? Which is to say, how can we help to lower the level of perceived loss by greater degrees of transparency, greater degrees of shared risk, greater degrees of generosity and caring and

solidarity within teams so people don't feel as personally exposed but operate in a field of mutual experimentation, learning and evolution.

As facilitators we are seeking to create much more of what Professor Amy Edmondson would call psychologically safe environments. To help teams become trust-based environments and at the same time to take more and more of an enterprise view. This can be done through tactical measures such as job rotation or evening salon's with senior leaders from other functions. However, its most effectively done in my experience by building the relational tissue that has leaders devoted to one another's success and ignited by the collective mission.

In our sessions we often use exercises that help people to get to know each other in a much more personal way, as a vehicle for creating that kind of fabric of caring and interpersonal dedication.

What I have discovered is that for many leaders there is an almost immediate willingness to drop the historic divide between personal and professional and to blur the lines enough that leaders can start to really get to know each other in a meaningful way and invest in each other's success. We have worked side by side in isolation and loneliness and self-reliance for far too long. Leaders are grateful to encounter more of the interiority of their colleagues and equally relieved to lower the shields they guard themselves with and share their lives, their hopes, their fears, and their longings and dreams.

This level of trust and belonging is part of what Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey tell us drives a "deliberately developmental organization." People must feel like there is a co-investment in each other's success.

People must feel like there is a co-investment in each other's success. This naturally produces a willingness to mentor and guide and give feedback and coaching and to see feedback as the gift that it is. We are ripe for a new threshold of solidarity, mutuality and co-development in organizational culture and now is the time. ■



**Amy Elizabeth Fox**  
Co-Founder and CEO of  
Mobius Executive Leadership

Since 2005 Amy Elizabeth Fox has served as one of the founders and Chief Executive Officer of Mobius Executive Leadership, a global transformational leadership firm. For the last twenty years she has served as a leadership and culture change advisor to eminent professional services firms and Fortune 500 companies and facilitated immersive executive development programs for senior leaders.

Mobius offers top team intervention, business mediation, executive coaching and personal mastery programs all aimed at unlocking potential and building deeper trust, intimacy and connection within a company's top tier. Mobius also sponsors a professional development arm for maturing transformational practitioners called the Next Practice Institute and has an e-learning arm entitled Mobius Touch.

Since 2013 Mobius has had the privilege of partnering with the premier leadership advisory firm, Egon Zehnder, together offering sessions for leaders from around the world. Amy serves as the lead faculty for the Executive Discovery program, a quarterly invitation only multi-client program for senior leaders. Further she has guided programs for long standing clients in tandem to overseeing the evolution and expansion of Mobius.

Amy is considered an expert in healing individual, family and collective trauma and has been a pioneer in introducing trauma-informed development and psycho-spiritual principles into leadership programs. In addition to her work with Mobius, Amy is a senior student of mystical teacher Thomas Huebl, serving as part of his online faculty team and as lead faculty for his two-year Timeless Wisdom Training. Together Amy and Thomas are guiding a first of its kind year-long certification in Trauma Informed Consulting and Coaching.

Amy is also on the faculty of the African Leadership Institute's Desmond Tutu Fellows program at Oxford and has served as a guest faculty member at the Acosta Institute.

Before starting Mobius Amy worked as a trainer for Vantage Partners, as a senior executive in WellSpace, and as the Director of Public Affairs for the Cathedral of St John the Divine where she supported Paul Gorman, Carl Sagan and Vice President Gore in a decade long effort to engage the American faith communities in responding to climate change and environmental degradation.

Amy has a Masters in Counseling from Lesley College and a BA in Psychology from Wesleyan University.





# Love and Healing in Business: A Trauma Informed Journal

Part One: 2024

BY AMY ELIZABETH FOX, MA

