



CO-ACTIVE LEADERSHIP

FIVE WAYS TO LEAD

Karen and Henry Kimsey-House

Authors of the international bestseller *Co-Active Coaching*

More Praise for *Co-Active Leadership*

“You should get this book, read it, and do what it says. Karen and Henry wrote the book on coaching, and this current work extends their thinking and research into leadership. Great leaders are almost always great coaches, so this is a chance to learn from the masters.”

—**Dave Logan, *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *Tribal Leadership* and *The Three Laws of Performance* and faculty member, USC Marshall School of Business**

“Karen Kimsey-House and Henry Kimsey-House are rooted in a new and profound understanding of creativity in the universe. In brain science, cellular biology, ecosystem dynamics, and evolutionary cosmology, scientists are replacing the model of top-down control with a model of collaborative synergies. We have come to realize the way in which each individual carries a dimension of the whole system. There is no ‘Star CEO’ directing activities in a star; rather, the organizing intelligence of the star comes from the synergistic interactions within the entire community of atoms. *Co-Active Leadership* shows each of us how to move into this form of consciousness and pass through the gateway to our unique role in this historic shift from the modern industrial society to an integral civilization.”

—**Brian Thomas Swimme, Professor, California Institute of Integral Studies; author of *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos* and *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*; and creator of *Canticle to the Cosmos*, *Earth’s Imagination*, and *The Powers of the Universe***

“The Co-Active Leadership Model has been a powerful tool in the transformation of our organization from a more traditional structure to one of shared leadership where everyone feels a sense of responsibility for the whole. It’s been a remarkable shift, and I would recommend this book highly to anyone seeking to enhance participation, unleash creativity, and foster organizational change.”

—**Bill Twist, cofounder and CEO, Pachamama Alliance**

“*Co-Active Leadership* is a groundbreaking book that cuts to the chase of what leadership really means in action! Clearly written with practical anecdotes, this is a must-read for anyone seeking to be a true leader.”

—**Adrian Hayes, world-record-breaking adventurer, speaker, and leadership coach**

“I believe that everyone has the capacity to lead, and this book could not say it any better! What a gift for anyone thinking about leadership. This book will help transform your approach to leadership as well as provide an excellent resource on Co-Active Leadership.”

—**HRH Princess Noor bint Asem, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Co-Active Coach**

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Co-Active Leadership

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Dedicated to the Co-Active Leaders who have touched
our lives and the Co-Active Leaders yet to come

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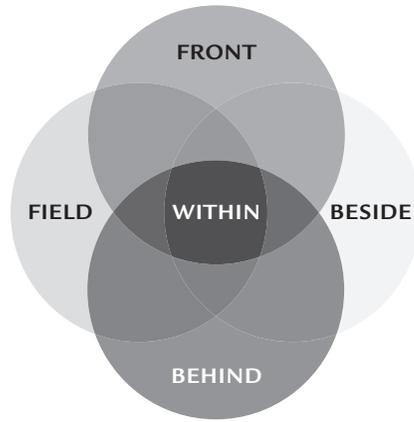
The Co-Active Leadership Model

One-dimensional models of leadership do not have the range to celebrate and honor different expressions of leadership. To be truly effective, communities—whether in the family or in the workplace—need a model that is multidimensional and inclusive. This allows leadership to be a flexible system in which everyone can assume leadership regardless of his or her role or title and move fluidly through different dimensions of leadership, depending on the needs of the moment.

Multidimensionality and agility allow us to access a broader range of resources from a number of powerful leaders, each taking responsibility in a different way. Collaborative solutions emerge that would not have been available from one-dimensional, hierarchical leadership structures in which important considerations are often overlooked.

The Co-Active Leadership Model offers five different dimensions, five different ways to lead. Though it is useful to pull the different dimensions apart for the sake of learning and practice, the dimensions of the Co-Active Leadership Model are designed to work together. Everyone, at different times, plays all five roles, shifting from dimension to dimension as the circumstances and the needs of the moment require.

Co-Active Leadership



The Co-Active Leadership Model

When Co-Active Leadership is really working, leadership is shared at every level in a system, be it an organization, a family system, or some other kind of community. While there are various roles and responsibilities, everyone involved feels committed and engaged because they understand that they have an important contribution to make to the success of the whole.

It's normal to find that we are more skillful and comfortable in one dimension than another. For example, some of us excel at Leader in Front and need to learn to give way to others from time to time. Others of us are extraordinary at Leader Behind and tend to shy away from the spotlight. As Co-Active leaders, we need practice all the dimensions of the model and learn to shift from one to the other nimbly.

Sometimes there is concern that with so many people contributing and participating, we won't be able to move forward effectively. We fear that there will be too much *co* and not enough *active*. It is important to remember that participation is not the

same as agreement. It is entirely possible for a group of people to move forward quite effectively, aligned around a common vision and with considerable disagreement about the most effective action. When people are allowed to own responsibility for the decisions they make, they can seek advice and input from others while still making a considered decision that does not comply with everyone's opinion.

Leader Within lies at the center of the model and is formed by the overlap of the remaining four dimensions, which are Leader in Front, Leader Behind, Leader Beside, and Leader in the Field. This is because the dimension of Leader Within is unique and also present in all the other dimensions.

What follows is a brief description of the dimensions of Co-Active Leadership. In the following chapters, we'll be illustrating each dimension more fully and offer examples of how the dimension might be utilized.

Co-Active Leader Within: Self-Acceptance and Self-Authority

In the Co-Active Leader Within dimension, we are striving to be our best self every day and to follow Mahatma Gandhi's instruction "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."¹ Co-Active Leaders Within take responsibility for their world by accepting themselves fully (*co*) and living their lives with integrity in accordance with their personal values (*active*).

When we are able to choose our own humanity with all of its brilliance and imperfection, we can let go of trying to fix ourselves and instead reach to expand and grow so that we both live our life more fully and offer more to our world.

In this dimension, we know that we are enough and that simply living our life with openheartedness and integrity will suffice.

Co-Active Leader in Front: Connection and Direction

When we think of leadership, we usually think of Leader in Front. Being a Co-Active Leader in Front, however, is not about being the boss and telling everyone what to do.

Co-Active Leaders in Front foster connection with the people who are following them (*co*) and stand firmly for a clear direction and purpose (*active*).

When a Leader in Front is Co-Active, people feel inspired, engaged, and clear. They are able to give their best because they all know that they are important and valuable.

As Co-Active Leaders in Front, we can let go of figuring out everything on our own because we understand that we need other people's input to make our vision real.

Most of all, in the dimension of Co-Active Leader in Front, we are not trapped by ego or defined by our role. While we are willing to be the one in front and will do our best to point the way, we also know when to sit down and make room for other people's creativity and talent.

Co-Active Leader Behind: Serving and Coaching

The essence of Co-Active Leader Behind is service to others. Rather than trying to look good or get ahead, Co-Active Leaders Behind focus on providing whatever is needed and, through openhearted

and enthusiastic participation, advance the action in a way that holds everyone together. They are, therefore, the backbone of any organization or undertaking.

Co-Active Leaders Behind are committed to empowering and calling forth the brilliance of other people by believing in them and coaching them through deep listening, powerful questions, and acknowledgment.

It is important to note that Co-Active Leader Behind is not about deferring or letting go. Co-Active Leaders Behind understand that we all must work together, and they seek to provide whatever is needed for the whole. In this dimension, we know that we matter and are clear that our wholehearted participation is a critical part of any endeavor.

Co-Active Leader Beside: Partnership and Synergy

Most of the time, co-leading consists of dividing responsibilities and taking turns. Co-Active Leader Beside is a partnership between two people in which both people are 100 percent responsible for every part of the initiative.

Co-Active Leaders Beside take responsibility for their world by consciously designing their partnership around a shared vision and intention (*co*) and leveraging each other's strengths so that a remarkable synergy occurs with the whole being that is greater than the sum of the parts (*active*).

Co-Active Leaders Beside are committed to leaning into their co-leader 100 percent, balancing openness and curiosity about the other person with a commitment to stand fully in their own authority. In the dimension of Co-Active Leader Beside, we can disagree

with each other in a way that is dynamic and productive because we are both committed to something larger than being right about our own point of view.

Co-Active Leader in the Field:

Intuition and Innovation

Co-Active Leader in the Field is not about leading a project, a team, or even an organization. Instead, Co-Active Leader in the Field is about noticing and taking responsibility for our impact in and on our world. If, as we said in chapter 1, leaders are those who are responsible for their world, the dimension of Co-Active Leader in the Field connects us to a global sense of the world we are creating.

In the dimension of Co-Active Leader in the Field, we slow down and expand our sensory awareness so that we can access our imagination, intuition, and insight (*co*), and have the courage and commitment to act on what we sense in a way that is innovative and new (*active*).

When we slow down and open up our senses, new understanding comes that we just can't access from the hustle of our daily routines. We are able to see the big picture and discover patterns and cycles that can lead us to new insight and innovation.

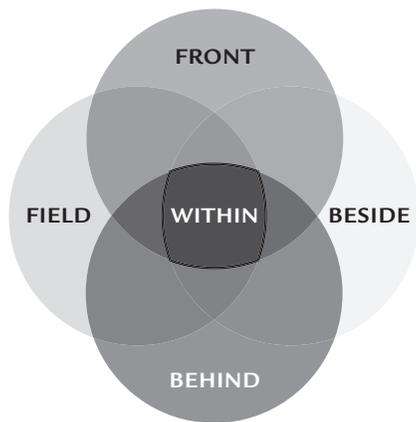
Co-Active Leaders in the Field take responsibility for their world by slowing down and observing the deeper implications of what is happening, and by trusting their instinct and intuition beyond what is known and can be proved.

Going Deeper into the Model

In the next chapters, we will open up the Co-Active Leadership Model so that we can explore each of the dimensions more fully.

The Co-Active Leadership Model

In chapter 8, “The Dance of the Dimensions,” we’ll put the model back together again, providing several examples of how people are using it in their work with themselves and with their organizations, teams, students, and families.



Co-Active Leader Behind

In the last chapter, we discussed how important it was for Leaders in Front to have the agility to sit down and allow others to step forward by moving to the dimension of Leader Behind. It's important to note that sitting down does not mean sitting back. Co-Active Leader Behind is not about sitting back, taking a break, abdicating, or being a passenger.

Co-Active Leader Behind is perhaps the most misunderstood of the dimensions. In command-and-control, one-dimensional leadership, we believe that “front” is better than “behind” because we believe that the Leaders in Front have all the power and influence. This creates a sense that everyone else is powerless and therefore should abdicate responsibility and follow blindly.

Make no mistake: Leaders Behind have the power to make or break any endeavor. When those behind are not willing to choose responsibility, it sucks the life out of any community or organization, generating separation and divisiveness. Blame and victimhood reign along with resentment, backbiting, and collusion.

Successful Co-Active Leaders Behind know they matter and understand the importance of their contribution, taking great pride in providing what is needed behind the scenes and out of the spotlight's glare. These Co-Active leaders are both the glue that holds everyone together (*co*) and the ones who provide the resources needed

for things to go well (*active*). Co-Active Leaders Behind give themselves fully to the joy of participation and love, nourishing the brilliance in others because they know this adds to the goodness and the wholeness for all.

What Is Co-Active Leader Behind?

Co-Active Leader Behind is expressed through inclusive, dynamic followership.

The essence of Co-Active Leader Behind is service to others. Co-Active Leaders Behind trust the character and strength of the Co-Active Leader in Front and seek to evoke leadership in others by listening deeply, championing and acknowledging, and fostering wholeness through impeccability and integrity.

When Co-Active Leaders Behind give themselves wholeheartedly to serving the leadership and expression of others, they generate an inspirational sense of everyone working together. Co-Active Leaders Behind *know* they are responsible for their world. They don't need a title to tell them so.

There's a wonderful TED talk by Derek Sivers titled "How to Create a Movement."⁶ Only three minutes long, the video clearly conveys the power and impact of Co-Active Leaders Behind. In the video, which was shot at an outdoor concert, one man (whom Sivers identifies as a "lone nut") stands up and begins dancing wildly. Then another person joins in, and Sivers makes the point that it is the *second* person, not the first, who grounds the action, taking it from the crazy and isolated movement of a "lone nut" to something worth following. As the video progresses, more and more people join in. Soon, everyone is dancing wildly and freely. The concert is transformed from an audience of observers to a community of wholehearted participants, actively cocreating a world of celebration.

This is the power of Co-Active Leader Behind. While the master creates the philosophy of any movement, it is the disciples who bring the work fully into existence and make it real and lasting. When they follow wholeheartedly and fully, Co-Active Leaders Behind have a tremendous impact.

Co-Active Leaders Behind also take responsibility for whom they are following and why. They do not follow blindly. Instead, they are willing to face the risks of challenging and asking questions to keep Leaders in Front in touch with and in tune with the vision. Instead of following halfheartedly and holding back vulnerability in case things don't work out, Co-Active Leaders Behind give 100 percent of themselves, offering whatever is needed to move the action forward for everyone.

Not every community or organization is ready to embrace multi-dimensional leadership, and those at the top are sometimes attached to position and power. Co-Active Leaders Behind need to remember that powerlessness is a two-way collusion; complying and “going along to get along” come at a very high price and only keep the power imbalance in place. If there is truly no willingness to value the input and contribution of Co-Active Leaders Behind, then it may be time for those leaders to find another environment that is more committed to collaboration and wholeness.

What Is the *Co*?

Mahatma Gandhi said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” In the *co* of Co-Active Leader Behind, one's heart is filled with generosity and gratitude for being able to nurture the dream of the world through serving others.

Often, in one-dimensional leadership, we view serving as transactional rather than relational. Because we are scrambling to advance

our position and climb the ladder to the top, our attention is focused on making sure that what comes back to us is of equal or greater value than what we gave. In this transactional framework, much of the shimmer and magic of service is lost because there is an expectation or a need waiting to be met. Real service creates intimacy and connection because it stems from a sense of abundance and generosity and a deep desire to contribute.

Some years ago, Henry, one of the authors of this book, was an assistant at a weeklong outdoor program that began with an eight-mile hike into an isolated wilderness area. The twenty participants were to live together for several days, working as a community to make camp, prepare meals, and do introspective work to prepare for the solo experience that was to come.

The solo was the highlight of the week, with each person in the group camping in isolation for several days and nights with water but no food. Participants returned from this experience at high noon on a very warm and sunny July day. Dusty and hot, they trudged back into the main camp after days of talking to no one. Rather than rushing up to greet everyone with lots of excitement and noise, Henry and his team welcomed people silently and led them to a shady spot, gently inviting them to sit down on a circle of waiting stumps and logs. There, the participants were provided with bowls of warm water to wash dirty hands and tired feet and were given plates of fresh fruit with which to break the fast. Henry and his colleagues went around the circle, kneeling in front of each person and offering these gifts simply and humbly. There was tremendous emotion on both sides, and it was clear that both the assistants and the participants were deeply nourished by this openhearted act of service.

While the love with which Henry and his team offered their gifts was a vital part of being Co-Active Leaders Behind, the

thoughtfulness in anticipating what would most nourish and serve had quite an impact: cool shade on a hot day, warm water with which to soothe tired feet, ripe fruit to nourish the body. Service to others means that there is eagerness and joy in providing whatever is most needed, and thoughtfulness in anticipating it.

Anticipating what will most serve is a hallmark of great service. Recall your favorite visit to a restaurant or hotel. Perhaps the person at reception already knew your name. Perhaps you were welcomed with a warm towel or a cool drink after a long, hot drive from the airport. Or perhaps your waiter remembered you from your last visit and recalled your favorite cocktail or dish. Thoughtfulness and anticipation of the details causes people to feel valued whatever the setting, whether at a family gathering or in an organization.

Like Leaders in Front, Leaders Behind are looking ahead. However, instead of looking for *where* to go, they are looking for what might be needed *as* we go. By being fully present and anticipating what might be needed, Co-Active Leaders Behind can smooth out the potentially bumpy places on the journey, making it easier going for everyone.

This is not about the rigidity that comes with trying to be sure that there are never any bumps. Actually, a few bumpy places are needed and important. Surprises lend richness and offer learning on the journey. When Leaders Behind anticipate well, the bumps center on new discoveries and learning rather than struggling because insufficient thought and care was giving in planning.

In addition to serving others, finding others right orients Co-Active Leaders Behind toward looking for and appreciating value rather than being critical and always spotting problems.

Finding others right means we anticipate that others will likely make mistakes, and we are willing to have room for their humanness

and fallibility. When we are willing to find others right, we are willing to forgive mistakes and blunders and can support others in taking responsibility for their mistakes in an encouraging rather than punishing way.

When we can find the rightness of a situation or a person, our perspective shifts dramatically. The circumstances change from “unworkable” to “possible.” This shift in perspective creates our world.

Have you ever noticed that once you start thinking about buying, for example, a blue Mini Cooper, all you see on the road are blue Minis? We see what we are looking for. If we are looking for problems and unworkability, that’s what we will find. If we are looking for opportunity and possibility, we will create that also.

Imagine if we were to find others right *first*, knowing that people make mistakes and will need to make course corrections along the way. Instead of looking for flaws and doing our best to cut others down to size, what if we started by looking for the value and usefulness in what was being offered? Imagine what would be possible if, rather than having to *watch* their backs, people had Co-Active Leaders Behind *at* their back, serving and supporting.

This doesn’t mean that Leaders Behind just say yes and follow blindly. As we said earlier, Leaders Behind must be responsible for whom they choose to follow. If there is not wholeness and goodness at the front, then it is the responsibility of Leaders Behind to say so or to follow elsewhere.

Impeccability lays the foundation for the affirmative openheartedness of Co-Active Leader Behind. In *The Four Agreements*, by Don Miguel Ruiz, the first agreement is “Be Impeccable With Your Word.” Here’s how Ruiz describes this agreement: “Be Impeccable With Your Word. Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.”⁷

Our words have huge power to create our world. Sometimes we don't realize that what we say and who we are being as we say it have everything to do with how things go in our lives.

Gossip is a cancer that can eat away at any community, be it an organization or a family. Gossip happens behind the scenes in the dark, so it is both toxic and elusive. Because issues are not dealt with in a forthright way, rumors spread. It becomes very difficult to know what is really going on and therefore what to trust.

Impeccability is a commitment to cleanliness in our communication. It ensures that conversations are courageous ones that foster wholeness and intimacy. Rather than gossiping around the water cooler, it's important to speak up and ask the question that is on everyone's mind.

This takes a great deal of courage. Regardless of how safe or secure the environment, it can still be frightening to be the one who says the emperor has no clothes. It's crucial that Co-Active Leaders Behind support each other in the courageousness of impeccability and that, in service to wholeness, they look for what else needs to be spoken rather than hanging each other out to dry.

What Is the *Active*?

The two most important *actions* of Leader Behind are believing and coaching.

If we are to truly serve others, we must be willing to actively express our belief in them. The coaching skills of acknowledgment and championing are two great ways to do this.

Acknowledgment is not the same thing as praise, nor is it simply a compliment. Praise focuses on appreciating what someone does. It's nice to receive praise for a job well done. Acknowledgment, however, can be transformative because it expresses belief in the character and inner strength of another. This supports

people in recognizing gifts that they may have overlooked or dismissed, and it generates intimacy and connection because it strikes right at the heart of where someone is growing and getting stronger.

Heartfelt and authentic acknowledgment has the power to transform people and situations. Recently, two of our team members were attending a planning meeting at a very conservative client organization. The meeting was aimed at designing a one-day program to develop new competencies and teach people the Co-Active skills needed to step into a new role. Of the three people representing the client organization, Michelle was the only one familiar with the Co-Active model. As director of human resources, she had worked diligently for some time to introduce this relationship-based way of working to her organization. The other two representatives just weren't getting it. The group had been working together for an hour or more without much progress.

Acknowledgment came up as a potential content piece, and our team members began trying to capture, in words, the power and impact of acknowledgment. This is a bit like trying to describe a sunset to someone over the telephone. The visceral experience loses something in the translation.

All of a sudden, one of our team members turned to Michelle and blushed a little. Then she took a deep breath and looked Michelle squarely in the eye. "Michelle," she said, "you are a real pioneer. You've been working hard for a long time, risking it all to bring this important work to your organization. The people in your company will benefit tremendously from your willingness to be a Leader in Front and stand for what you believe is important."

The room became very quiet. Michelle began to tear up a little as the acknowledgment landed. No one needed to say anything. The impact of the acknowledgment was clearly felt, not just by Michelle,

but also by everyone else in the room. After a moment or two, the group proceeded with their planning meeting, which moved forward with much more connection, heart, and engagement.

We get shy about acknowledgment. It's intimate to see another person deeply, and we tend to steer away from intimacy, even though it's something that we long for with all our hearts. It takes courage to risk, to be the first one to reach out and expose ourselves. There is such a need to look good and be cool and have our act together. There is such a fear of being seen as corny or goofy or weak.

Yet, being authentically seen by others is like water and sunshine for a plant—it expands us. Acknowledgment connects Co-Active Leaders Behind to a place of humanity and heart so that they can grow the best in others.

Championing someone is an absolute act of belief. When we champion, we plant the other person's flag on the hill that lies ahead and let him or her know that we are on the sidelines cheering wildly and believing fully in our hearts that he or she will prevail.

Championing another person is a powerful way to encourage risk taking and expansion. On the way to meaningful success, there will inevitably be failure and course correction. It's easy to get discouraged and give up. When we champion someone, our belief and faith inspires him or her to keep going past the challenging parts and on to eventual success. To continually reach for the extraordinary, we need to know that we have people championing us as Co-Active Leaders Behind.

Several years ago, Karen's youngest sister, Martha, encouraged her to give running a go and challenged her to run the San Francisco Half Marathon. Though filled with a longing to feel the wind in her hair, Karen was fairly doubtful. She was fifty-seven at the time and pretty sure that she was too old to take up running. Martha was certain that Karen could succeed.

When Karen started training, she was able to run only sporadically with lots of walking in between. Still, Martha remained convinced that Karen could become a runner. She checked in frequently and celebrated the smallest successes. She declared that she would run alongside her older sister. Eventually, Martha's confidence in Karen prevailed. Karen's speed and distance slowly increased.

The day of the race arrived, and Karen felt both prepared and nervous. The weather was awful—cold and foggy with a brisk headwind. However, excitement and adrenaline were flowing freely at the start, and the two sisters set off running together in the early-morning dark.

Though fully capable of a faster speed, Martha stayed with Karen every step of the way. When Karen was ready to pack it in halfway through, Martha refused to give up, letting her sister know in no uncertain terms that quitting at this point was complete nonsense and not the stuff of which Karen was made.

Together they crossed the finish line, running on pace and flying high. Though that was quite a victory, the deepening of their relationship and their love for each other was the biggest win. Yes, Karen worked hard and trained regularly. However, it was her sister Martha who championed her and kept her going through all the inevitable ups and downs on the way to success.

Co-Active Leaders Behind also use the coaching skills of deep listening and powerful questions to evoke the creativity and brilliance of others.

Listening deeply to another person has a tremendous impact. There's no better way to serve and nourish the magnificence in another person than to simply listen to him or her openheartedly and without judgment.

Unfortunately, listening deeply to another person has become rare. We are so focused on results and outcomes, and this fosters

a preoccupation with the task rather than the people. In the pressure cooker of our daily lives, we are usually behind, running hard to catch up and make our way through our very long to-do lists. At work, we are under huge pressure to deliver results. We rush home and try hard to get everything done before we fall into bed exhausted. Even with our children, we often listen superficially because we are so preoccupied by the many tasks that fill our lives.

Also, we tend to listen to the words that are being spoken with a heavy emphasis on what is being said. Think of all the fights you have had centering on what was or was not being said. “That’s what you *said!*” “Yes, but it’s not what I *meant!*” “Well, it’s what you *said.*” Sound at all familiar?

For Co-Active Leaders Behind, it is important to listen beyond the words into the heart of the other person. We must be present enough and receptive enough to “hear” with our whole being beyond just the words that are being spoken.

This can be more challenging than it sounds. Our mind chatter can often be loud and demanding, nattering away about all kinds of opinions, judgments, and personal concerns. It takes practice and discipline to shift our attention beyond our internal dialogue and focus it firmly on another person.

It’s helpful to imagine our listening as a spotlight. When we are listening to our own internal dialog, that’s what gets illuminated. When we discipline ourselves to point the spotlight of our listening toward another person, the impact can be tremendous.

One of our clients offered us this beautiful story about the power of listening. George was a busy entrepreneur, and although he loved his children deeply, he was often preoccupied with his business and listened halfheartedly to their ramblings.

One evening, his six-year-old daughter was trying to talk with him about her cat, Puffy Gold, who had recently died and was buried

in the backyard. Our busy entrepreneur was responding with the usual vague superficial listening sounds of “Hmm” and “Ahh.” All of a sudden, his daughter climbed into his lap, placed one hand on either side of George’s face, and turned his head firmly until he was facing her. Looking right into her father’s eyes, she cried, “You are *not* listening to me, Daddy!”

Her father took a deep breath and set aside everything else but his daughter. Drawing her close, he asked her what she missed most about Puffy Gold now that the cat was gone. This was his daughter’s first brush with death, and rather than trying to explain things or fix the problem, George asked her what she thought about death and what that meant to her. He asked her if her heart hurt and what that felt like. George slowed things way down and listened deeply to his daughter’s responses.

Soon it was time for bed, and as George kissed his lovely daughter goodnight, he saw her clearly, not just as his child but also as a very special young person going through an important life transition. He’d been so busy and preoccupied that he’d almost missed it.

As this story illustrates, deep listening leads to curiosity, and expansive, open-ended questions naturally ensue. These questions are powerful because they encourage the other person to reflect on what lies within her and what is most meaningful and true for *her*, not for the listener. In this story, it was important for George’s daughter to find her own way and to come to her own conclusions without someone else telling her what was important or true.

The very best and most valuable questions we can ask another are simple and innocent. What matters about that? What is most important to you here? What do you think, feel, and want? These questions let go of knowing and of providing information or a point of view and instead open up the internal knowing of another. Our interest in the other person’s experience and the openheartedness

and simplicity of our questions create enormous room for someone to expand and grow.

We all have within us a number of creative responses to the challenges we face, and the answers we discover for ourselves are usually what hold the most resonance and meaning. Coaching provides a powerful context for this discovery.

What about the Hyphen?

The hyphen of Co-Active Leader Behind rests in knowing that one is *responsible* without being *in charge* and makes it clear that Co-Active leadership is not defined by one's position but by one's contribution and willingness to be responsible for one's world.

This expands the creativity and resourcefulness that are available to all and ensures that we are all sticking together and moving together while at the same time fostering ownership of what is unfolding.

Co-Active Leader Behind can be nourishing and fulfilling. When it is appreciated and valued, when it is practiced with sincerity, it lifts us out of any victim story we might have lingering and allows us to live and work together with our hearts at peace. We are able to rest in the joy of service and the inherent knowledge that we are creating our world together every day in a way that is important, connected, and real.