

HOW TO BE AND DO TO CREATE VALUE FOR ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GREATER GOOD

Alan Mulally

I met Frances Hesselbein in the early 2000s while I was serving at Boeing and she was leading the Leader to Leader Institute (now the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Forum). Marshall Goldsmith invited several of us to a “What’s Next?” client gathering at his

†This article is part of a Special Issue commemorating the life and leadership of Frances Hesselbein.

home in Rancho Santa Fe, California. The weekend gathering included CEOs and leadership executives who were being coached or had been coached by Marshall and were considering their next phase of service and Frances and I were there to support the process.

Though I knew of Frances and greatly admired her work at the Girl Scouts of the USA and with Peter Drucker at the Leader to Leader Institute, we had never met in person. The first morning, Frances and I met and realized and appreciated our mutual love of service for the greater good.

When Marshall started the meeting with his executive clients, Frances and I sat next to each other on one of the long couches. Each executive took their turn sharing their current situation and what they were considering might be the next phase for their leadership. In the stories, we heard weariness and discontent with the issues they faced in their leadership, including people, profit, or purpose. They were struggling with thinking about a compelling vision and a higher purpose of service going forward.

As the meeting progressed, Frances took my hand. For the next three hours, we sat quietly holding hands, neither of us saying a word until finally every leader had shared their situation and thoughts, except for Frances and me. That's when she squeezed my hand gently and said, "It's time for you to speak."

I shared with the group that for me leadership is an opportunity to serve and to love people up. It is an opportunity to create value for all the stakeholders and the greater good by creating goods and services that people value and need.

When I'd finished, Frances smiled at me and said, "Thank you." And that was the first time of many where I felt so encouraged, validated, and supported in my leadership and service journey by Frances.

A few years later, in 2006 when I was now serving at Ford, Frances's Leader to Leader Institute recognized me with their first ever Leader of the Future. The Leader of the Future Award was given to recognize and elevate values-based leaders of character who have

the vision to see and the courage to shape the future. It was presented to leaders of integrity and character who are serving the public good by creating cross-sector partnerships (social, public, and private) and who are a model for working together to create value for all the stakeholders and the greater good.

Which leads me to one of the most important principles Frances shared with me, that "It is the quality and character of the leader that determines the organization's performance and results."

In other words, the Be determines the Do. As Frances explained in her book *Hesselbein on Leadership*, "All the How to's in the world won't work until the 'how to be's are defined, embraced by the leaders, and embodied and demonstrated in every action, every communication, every leadership moment."

Every word Frances said rings true. It is our values, beliefs, and behaviors that define who we are, what we believe, what we do, and how we work with others.

And for me everything boils down to three things: humility, love, and service. Which is why in my leadership service of nearly four decades at the Boeing Company, leading the building and design of the 777 and saving Boeing Commercial Airplanes after the devastating attacks of 9/11, to the leading the turnaround of the Ford Motor Company 2006–2013 during The Great Recession, I have taken Frances's

*Every moment with
Frances was a learning,
elevating, and loving
moment.*

words one step further into *how* we actually create and nurture these leaders of character at every level.

Over these many decades, before and since Frances and I met, my life's work, my love and service, has been developing, implementing, and sharing the "Working Together" Leadership and Management System, with its operating process and expected behaviors that support the Be and the Do, the character and competencies, and the principles and practices of leaders who create value for all the stakeholders and the greater good. Who Frances was, her character and heart, are hugely responsible for encouraging my leadership service journey.

Every moment with Frances was a learning, elevating, and loving moment. That is the type of leader she was, and she encouraged me to be the same. Thank you, Frances, for the very best leadership by example, education, endorsement, and love. To serve is to live my dear friends, Alan.

© 2023 The Authors. *Leader to Leader* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of University of Pittsburgh.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



Alan Mulally is the former President and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes and former CEO of the Ford Motor Company who led Boeing to the global leader of commercial airplanes and Ford to the #1 automotive brand in the USA.

He has been recognized for his contributions, industry leadership, and service, including being named #3 on Fortune's "World's Greatest Leaders." Mulally previously served on President Obama's U.S. Export Council and as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Aerospace Industries Association. He currently serves on the board of directors of Alphabet, the Mayo Clinic, and Carbon 3D. Learn more: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/t8cem27g5ks25bz/WT%20SLIDE%205%2001-27-23.pdf?dl=0> and <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ltl.20628>.