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Editing Samples, Full-Length Book Excerpts

Excerpt from *The Glass Elevator: A Guide to Leadership Presence for Women on the Rise*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

The ability to empathize is the last of our *Three Ways to Talk While You Listen*. Empathy is classically defined as the capability to identify with or vicariously experience the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of another. Not a bad gift to have.

You've probably heard the term Emotional Intelligence popping up in the workplace. Corporate leaders in industries and organizations nationwide are recognizing the development of Emotional Intelligence as a vehicle for change, and empathy is one of its component skills.

With this in mind, guess who has the greatest capacity for expressing empathy? You know the answer, because you can feel it in your gut. Women's ability to experience and identify with the emotions of others far exceeds the male population's, hands down. While I personally don't need scientific proof, a 2009 study showed that even at a younger age, girls score far higher in their ability to "stand in another's shoes" than boys. Girls can sense trouble. They can also sense need. They empathize far more than boys do.

That same skill we had when we were girls on the playground gives us power in the workplace. When we listen empathically, we absorb what people are saying and how they are saying it – the tone of their voice, the look in their eyes – and gain an understanding of what they are feeling and why. We do more than increase the accuracy of comprehension. We also promote trust and collaboration, two highly sought and valued traits in senior leadership.

Empathic listening begins with observation.

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Excerpt from *Virulence & Indifference: A Young Polish Boy's Extraordinary Survival, Heroic Reconstruction and Unthinkable Loss During and After World War II* (memoir)  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

On January 20, 1942, the Nazi high command and the leaders of the SS—no less than a dozen with PhDs—got together at the Wannsee Villa in Berlin to eat hors d'oeuvres served by waiters in coattails and bow ties, drink cognac, and hear Adolph Eichmann describe how to carry out what was now a strategic imperative of

the Third Reich: the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question.” Of course, we did not know anything about it at the time, but that conference sealed my family’s doom.

That July, the Germans put up notices all over town instructing all the Jews to leave their homes and report to a narrow quarter, literally across the street from where we lived. Our rabbi again told us this was God’s will, so despite my father’s protests, we took what we could in bundles on our backs and crossed the street. The Germans immediately put up a fence of barbed wire around the entire area. Though it was five feet high, one could easily lift it and slip under and out. But no one did. Instead, all two hundred plus families remained in the Ghetto area in mostly Jewish houses, five families to one little place, ten people to a room. A strict rationing system was instituted, whereby we received only a hundred and eighty grams of bread a day per person. This, we all had come to know, had become standard procedure all over Poland at the time. Our former home was now completely taken over by the Hurkovas.

After four weeks, on August 18, 1942, the Gestapo ordered all Ghetto inhabitants to assemble in the town square, which was inside the Ghetto. They had a document from the Judenrat that listed all the families. They read off each name. Everyone was present, except one family: the Lists.

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Excerpt from *A Life Through Letters: An Aging Father’s Legacy, A Son’s Revelation, The Birth of a Movement*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

I have several goals in publishing this book. First and foremost, the book serves as a tribute to my father. He was a minister and an incredible man who, late in life, decided to put his story on paper in the form of letters to the people and things that shaped his life. By the time he wrote these letters, he was not able to put pen to paper; in fact, he was barely able to hold a pen. A series of illnesses and operations left him with only one hand, and that hand had deteriorated due to neuropathy. But refusing to let that stop him, he typed out his series of letters by clutching a pencil in his shriveled hand and using the eraser to peck out one letter at a time on the keyboard. If he could find the motivation and passion to share his thoughts in a meaningful way through such adversity, it’s clear that the emotion had to come from the heart.

The letters have served as an extraordinary foundation for my family and me. In their original presentation, they were my father’s memoir in letter form. I believe the world deserves to hear that story—the wisdom within is truly priceless.

My second goal is to create context for the reader. As simply publishing the letters as a collection did not seem the best way to present them to the world, I have sought to convey a systematic understanding around each letter of who my father was and his view of the world, and in turn, display how that view shaped my life.

As I read through them, I discovered that the letters contained four fundamental traits that not only guided my father, but that are essential in anyone's life, be it personal or professional. Those traits are Empathy, Altruism, Fellowship, and Devotion. On reflection, I realized that these four elements were the primary tenets by which my father lived. But I also found other notable themes throughout my father's letters, and those are set off in "interludes" in each section. In organizing the book by these themes, it is my hope that you as the reader can better connect, learn, and grow as you experience the letters yourself.

My final goal with this book is to start a movement. I know it might sound grandiose, but if you don't dream big, you might as well not dream at all. The movement I hope to cultivate is one that brings the art of letter writing back to the forefront of society. Imagine if we could all connect once again in the written form. Could it have a huge and lasting impact on how we perceive the world? I contend that it can.

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Excerpt from *From Pebbles to Pathways: A Journey of Healing the Heart One Insight at a Time*, (memoir)  
(Copy Editor)

I felt truly blessed to live in such a pristine place as Tahoe. I still remember the magic feeling in realizing that God (what I had naturally come to understand as the presence that lives in all things) was especially alive in the water, rocks, pine trees, aspen trees, and birds. The grand lake and magnificent mountains with the backdrop of the change of seasons—the quiet splendor of the snow, in particular—was a source of great peace. I felt that the beauty of my surroundings matched my inner world. Even though my family life was far from stable, I felt very happy living in the mountains.

Upon arriving in "Incline," my father took us to the local Presbyterian church and we became members. It was important to him for us to attend church again as we had not gone to one with any regularity since my parents' divorce.

My father could no longer leave us alone as he did before, so he hired live-in babysitters to stay with us while he traveled. I missed him and my mother greatly. My mother had recently remarried and she and her new husband, Rick, continued to live in Southern California. Because of the distance, we saw her just twice a year—at Christmas and in the summer. The pain I felt not having her near me, even though she was troubled and sick, was excruciating. Underneath her pathology, I knew her love for me was deep and unconditional, and I loved her in return. Every day I longed to see her wavy, auburn hair and hazel eyes, and to hear her gentle voice, to have her feminine presence reflect beauty back to me and to show me how to grow up. I also felt the loss of not having my father, the strongest male figure I knew, to guide me on a daily basis.

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Excerpt from *House of the Sun: A Visionary Guide to Parenting in a Complex World*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

In order to understand this inner conflict, we need only look at the basic natures of the competing advice of the twentieth century, for they represent the fundamental war within ourselves, as well as the conflict of parents and those *between* parents.

Prior to this century, child-rearing advice was passed down through oral tradition or laid out by religious authorities. The early twentieth century saw the rise of mobility among families who left the farms and went to work in factories, which resulted in the gradual exodus of parenting from the community that helped to raise children—grandparents, aunts, and uncles who pitched in when needed and offered support and advice. Regardless of the quality of that advice, when the community was no longer there to fall back on, it gave rise to a cadre of experts who made their fame and fortune advising parents—primarily mothers—on what they should be doing. The basis of authority for these experts shifted to a reliance on scientific, medical, or psychological advice and often carried important-looking initials after the name.

These early experts were overwhelmingly male, and their opinions reflected their worldview. The suggestions they gave were what I call “Over-Fathering,” and it reflected a singular focus on order, work, struggle, discipline, performance, perfectionism, competition, and survival, as well as a harsh introduction to reality for the child, an intolerance for weakness or humanness, and a consequent rejection of the need for any kind of nurturing or the space to simply be a child. In response to this, later experts seeking to reverse this extreme gave advice that I call “Over-Mothering,” which glorified the individuality of the child, inflated the child’s ego, and emphasized the necessity for nurturing and building self-esteem, while sometimes ignoring the need for healthy structure, limits, rules, and habits in a child’s life.

Over-Fathering viewed life as completely objective, a black-and-white set of rules without regard to natural human differences. At its extremes, it fostered force and bred a variety of violence: physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. In contrast, Over-Mothering focused on the subjectivity of life, deemphasizing natural consequences, limits, and personal responsibility, and emphasizing the relativity of life where nothing is black-and-white.

At the extremes of Over-Mothering, we find the overprotective “helicopter parent,” hovering over every aspect of a child’s life and fostering a sometimes crippling dependency or role reversals. Where Over-Fathering shifted the adult burden onto the child prematurely, Over-Mothering assumed responsibility for the child’s efforts and their success or failure, and often nurtured past the time when the child needed to experience healthy failure. One extreme was callously focused on kicking the child out of the nest from birth, while the other feathered the nest so luxuriously that the child had no incentive to fly, nor the skills to do so.

Excerpt from *Think Smarter in a Digitally Enabled World*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

The reality for most of us is that we stay within a comfort zone of our beliefs and experiences and become accustomed to navigating our daily lives within that structure or framework. For the most part, this is okay. But in a time of significant change, this static knowledge and understanding can leave us out of touch and limit our potential. In fact, globalization and rapid technology advancements are by definition jolting large segments of our population out of their comfort zones on a daily basis. The way of being or doing things that worked just five years ago—or even one year ago—is no longer effective.

Unfortunately, for most of us it takes a crisis of some sort—either externally imposed on us or something of our own making—to push us into confronting our established patterns. This, of course, can be very painful, both for ourselves and for those close to us (believe me, I know firsthand). For example, if we don't take care of our health very well, we may end up with a major illness—heart disease or cancer, for example. Suddenly our world is upside down, and we're pushed out of our comfort zone in a big way. If we don't learn new ways of thinking or change our existing patterns of behavior, we risk the greatest change of all: death.

And yet, for many people, it's during these extreme periods of crisis that they experience great insights and personal transformation. The crisis often leaves us with no place to hide from ourselves, and the truth of our existence is laid bare. We're forced to confront aspects of our perceived reality that we've allowed to remain obscure, to shine light on things that have remained in shadows. In some instances, the tragedy or crisis hasn't happened to us directly, but is of such magnitude that it forces (or should force) us to confront our beliefs on a major issue, as if it did happen to us or could in the future. The 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting is a perfect example of this—it reignited the ongoing national conversation regarding gun violence. The crisis is so uncomfortable that it jolted us into mental action.

Of course, wouldn't it be better to obtain those life-changing insights without the tragedy? (We don't want to sit around saying, "Hey, can't wait till a good crisis comes so I'll finally be able to learn something new!" In fact, wouldn't it be great to proactively gain the wisdom to perhaps avoid or minimize the crisis or tragedy in the first place? And, isn't it the case that, when we finally do acquire that new knowledge, we often say, "Wow, I wish I would have figured this out sooner!" That itself is a key insight: the knowledge or information was always there—it may have existed for years, decades, centuries, or even longer—but we didn't discover it. So we need to become better knowledge explorers.

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Excerpt from *The Kind Self-Healing Book: Raise Yourself Up with Curiosity and Compassion*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

Anger gets a bad rap in our culture, but it's not anger itself that's bad. It's a natural feeling that occurs in humans, so it can't be "wrong." The negative reputation of anger comes from its being badly expressed, and our association of anger with frenzy—violent actions, chairs hurled, punches thrown, or yelling at strangers. We don't tend to see *good* examples of anger; rarely do we witness it as a feeling that comes, rolls through, and then dissipates and transforms like any other. Our parents likely did not model for us how to process anger, and they very likely ignored or criticized our anger, so that renders us pretty unprepared for transforming anger in adulthood. We're lacking that lesson, yet when we get it, we realize that anger can teach us about ourselves.

When anger rises in me, it stems from some form of hurt. Anger is a second feeling, not the foremost, root feeling. Our feelings get hurt, then we get MAD. Gosh, it happens fast! We react from the anger rather than from the truth of the hurt, so we say, "That bastard didn't call me back. What a jerk!" When, really what we feel under it all is, "I noticed that we didn't talk today. I really wanted to hear his voice." (There's information at hand: this must mean I like him!) Because we value strength and control over vulnerability in our culture, we enact our anger rather than our hurt. We say, "Why didn't you call?!" and the communication gets off on the wrong foot. We don't say the truth—"I missed hearing your voice yesterday"—because we fear states of vulnerability and we buy into the code of staying in control. Physical hurt, too, can turn into an angry response. Say you stub your toe and rather than coddle yourself, you shout, "Damn it!" at the chair that has always been in the same spot. As humans, we bump into things. We are clumsy sometimes. And we are also beautiful. We are imperfect.

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Excerpt from *The Boomer Book of Christmas Memories*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

The next few entries might well be subtitled "The Games of Marvin Glass."

Glass was a quirky, brilliant guy who refused to study children when he designed toys—he was afraid they would blab about the toy and let his competitors get the jump on him. Quirky, yes . . . and a bit paranoid.

He was an idea man and a very successful one, but you might wonder: Why didn't Glass make the games himself? Why, when he was an incredibly prolific and popular designer, didn't he sell his designs to other companies? There was actually a very good reason.

Earlier in his career, Glass designed and manufactured a flop: not a toy, but a Christmas tree ornament that looked like a stained-glass window. He invested over a million dollars in the product, lost that, and went into debt to the tune of \$300,000—a big amount now, but a stupendous sum in 1949.

Glass survived. One of his quirky traits was that he never gave up.

While living on borrowed money, Glass designed a small toy called the Busy Biddee, a pocket-sized chicken that laid five white marbles like eggs. Another toymaker produced it, selling more than 14 million units. After the royalties paid off Glass' debts and gave him a fresh start, he never ventured into manufacturing again. Instead, he became a designer and consultant, putting an estimated 500 new toys on the market between the time he created Mouse Trap in 1963 and his death in 1974. One magazine story about him began, "Manufacturers pay him \$1,000 a day plus expenses merely to have him inspect their pilot models and answer one question—'Should we make this?'"<sup>16</sup>

Mouse Trap was a huge hit, one of the first 3D games that built itself up from the classic game board. The point of the game was the construction of a surreal, bizarre mouse trap that every player's mouse had to avoid. Mouse Trap shook up the industry because it reshaped the rules about what made a good game, and though it had tons of little pieces that got lost quickly, it was fun while it lasted.

The game owed a lot to Rube Goldberg, a famous cartoonist who used to draw wild, complicated inventions (you can see some of them at [RubeGoldberg.com](http://RubeGoldberg.com)). Glass told designers at his company—MGA, for Marvin Glass Associates—that he wanted to create a toy that worked like a Rube Goldberg drawing, and Mouse Trap was the result.

After seeing the game, Goldberg's publisher asked the game designer for a royalty, since it was so similar to his contraptions. Glass ignored the request. Mr. Goldberg was already 80 and not interested in pursuing legal action, so there the matter rested.

After creating it, MGA offered the game to Milton Bradley, who passed on it. MGA then went to Ideal—the company that made Teddy Bears and dolls. Ideal had been branching out into other areas and had bought Glass' previous toy, Mr. Machine. They made lots of money from it, so their relationship with MGA was a good one. Mouse Trap was Ideal's first foray into the game industry, and it became a phenomenal hit. More than a million games sold before Christmas in 1963, the year it was introduced.

And—like so many other great toys—it's now made by Hasbro, via a sale of Ideal to CBS Toys, then to ViewMaster International, then to Tyco Toys, which merged with Mattel in the late '90s—but it's not made by Mattel now because the rights to Mouse Trap and a few other games were then sold to Hasbro.

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Excerpt from *The Consummate Leader: A Holistic Guide to Inspiring Growth in Others ... and Yourself*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

“Why am I here?”

It is a rare person who has never pondered this question. Exploring the existential issue of determining one’s reason for existence is one of the most important exercises in one’s life. Many would argue that having a sense of purpose is critical to imbuing life with a sense of meaning and direction; yet, in the hustle and bustle of our daily existence, many of us ignore the call of this significant question.

It is not uncommon in my work with leaders to come across individuals who feel as though they are running on a treadmill in their careers. They are accomplishing all the goals that have been set for them, earning their potential bonuses and salary increases, getting invited to take part in highly visible and prestigious projects, and receiving all the requisite recognition associated with these accomplishments, yet they are unfulfilled by it all. In many cases, their high achievement is rewarded not only with positive reinforcement, but also with higher expectations for success. They are chasing the accolades and money as an end in itself, and finding that despite living a life of comfort (or often, luxury), they still feel a niggling void in their lives.

Without a sense of purpose directing our actions, it is all too easy to mindlessly engage in our work and get caught up in doing for the sake of doing, without experiencing any sense of fulfillment in the process. Without a “North Star” guiding us, we can become ensconced in the trees and lose sense of the forest of our lives. In this scenario, we may consistently have the feeling that our lives would be better if only we had different jobs or responsibilities, yet feel too stuck to do anything about taking action to change things. Why? Because we don’t have the slightest clue what else we should be doing.

A sense of purpose provides us with an overarching view of why we are here. It can provide us with motivation when our work piles up or when we are dealing with a difficult situation or person. The feeling that our work is in service to some larger goal can help us to “dig deeper” and persist when the going gets hard. Even when things are going well, having a purpose can provide us with inspiration and passion.

Having a deep feeling of knowing what you are here to do creates a sense of energy, excitement, and direction. Instead of viewing professional life and personal life as two separate entities, people who have a sense of purpose view their work as an extension of who they really are, perhaps even a ministry of sorts, and a means of positively affecting the world.

In fact, there has been research that suggests that when you perceive your job as a “calling,” or something about which you are passionate that is fulfilling in its own right, you experience greater job satisfaction than if you simply perceive your work as a “job” or something you do solely to get paid.<sup>5</sup> Further, with a calling mentality, you are likely to have better job performance because you are more committed to putting in the time and energy to be successful. Given that we spend one-third of our lives at work, it is not surprising that

seeing your work as a calling generalizes to other aspects of your existence, such as greater life satisfaction and better health.

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Excerpt from ***Do More Good. Better.: Using the Power of Decision Clarity® to Mobilize the Talent of Your Nonprofit Team***

(Developmental/Copy Editor)

Most nonprofit organizations serve those who are at a disadvantage in our society. Traditional nonprofits fill societal gaps that government and business can't or won't address. As such, nonprofits naturally have a strong interest in equalizing opportunity, and raising up those who have fewer advantages in our society. Many of the staff of these nonprofits come from these "disadvantaged" or "diverse" communities.

In our societal shorthand, we contrast "diverse communities" with "communities of privilege." Those in a community of privilege enjoy longstanding advantages in our society that aren't necessarily questioned. These privileges become part of how we live, work, love—and how we think about power and make decisions. These privileges focus on areas of gender (male), race (white), class (middle or upper), age (middle), education (higher), able-bodied (not-disabled), or sexual/gender orientation (straight). While there are many other forms of privilege than the ones we've just mentioned, these tend to be recognized as the major differentiating characteristics—and the people with these privileges usually make most of the decisions.

What this means in terms of conflict and confusion around power and decision-making is profound. Nonprofit employees often represent the constituencies served by their organization. But while these entry- or mid-level employee populations are diverse, the senior positions are often filled with people with privilege. Given the concentrated nature of nonprofit power and decision-making in most organizations, this means the people who are *making* a majority of the decisions for their organization tend to be those with more privilege and societal advantage, while those *carrying out* the decisions tend to be those from more diverse backgrounds.

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Excerpt from *Gathering the Fragments of Myself: A Later-in-Life Coming-of-Age Story of One Woman's Road to Wellness*  
(Developmental/Copy Editor)

On the way to the party in Newport Beach, the girls coached me on what to expect.

“Watch out for Joel,” one of them said. “He’ll probably be there again. He’s such a flirt. Charming, but dangerous. He asked me out last week, and then when he came to pick me up, he hit on my roommate.”

I rolled my eyes in the dark of the back seat, wondering who would ever want to be with a guy like that.

The party was already in full swing when we arrived. Sandy was her usual boisterous self, joining the party as if she had already been there for hours. The other girls started mingling. As I drifted around looking for a safe place to land, I felt as if my dark cloud of insecurity would engulf me.

“Hi,” I said to someone I didn’t know, trying to reach out. No response. *I must not have said it loudly enough.* So I poured myself a soda and found a spot on the couch. The music was blaring; people were dancing and drinking and talking in small groups. I saw a balcony door open and caught a glimpse of a couple making out.

Then I spotted a guy dancing with several girls. Boy, was he cute, and obviously full of himself, gyrating like he was God’s gift to women. The way he was acting reminded me of my father. But I couldn’t keep myself from staring—he was so sexy and he moved perfectly with the music. His curly brown hair, moustache, and a cigarette dangling from his lip completed the look of total coolness. I glanced at the girls who were around him, and a lot of them were clearly charmed.

I was mesmerized by him when in the middle of a song, he made eye contact with me. I thought to look around to see if I was mistaken, but then he left his entourage and strutted over to me. He pulled me off the couch so fast that I didn’t have time to say no. The next thing I knew I was in the center of the room, my heart pounding, grooving with this guy as people watched us. Adrenaline shot through my body; my legs went weak. I hung on for dear life as he swirled me around and around until I was dizzy. But in the midst of the chaos, I noticed that his hands were warm, his smile contagious, his eyes bright blue and sparkly. And through the blur I couldn’t help but see the other girls looking at me. He caught my eye and winked.

A slow song came on, and he pulled me close to him. His mouth was next to my ear, and I could hear him breathing. His breath was warm and comforting, and I began breathing in rhythm with him. Butterflies danced in my stomach as his hands began to roam toward my butt. I wondered if I should stop him, pull back, or slap him. Only it felt kind of good so I did nothing.

When the song ended, I surrendered as he dipped me. Then, taking my hand, he walked me out to the balcony. My body was shaking, partly from the cold and partly from the emotions welling up inside me, while my mind was busy with thoughts. *Maybe he’s it. Maybe he’s the one I’ll fall in love with and live happily ever after.*

*Additional excerpts available upon request.*