



Chapter 1—It's Personal

What changed and why are you off track?

Having clarity amidst chaos cuts through the noise.

I see you. I see you staring out the window wondering how you are going to meet this challenge. You're thinking to yourself that you're smart, you're tough, and you've gotten through bigger challenges than this, but you find yourself unable to get past this obstacle. You start to doubt your abilities, asking yourself if you are cut out for this work anymore. Maybe it's time to explore new opportunities, maybe take a vacation, but none of this is possible because in the moment ... you're stuck. There's nowhere to go but to face the storm head-on, although you don't know what to do next.

This realization is tough for you because you reflect back to the days when you were a "rock star" whose high performance landed you in the role you have now. You went in with high hopes. Maybe things had been going well for many years, but then the environment changed. We know conditions change all the time; it's your past skills that elevated you to every challenge in life and business, and that's why you are the right person for the role. But you're questioning yourself now: why you can't get through this one? What's different, and what new skills do you need to elevate yourself to rock-star status again?

While the beginning of this story starts in a place that can be lonely and unsettling, there is a way out. I was you once—well, maybe several times—and it's very uncomfortable when we hit new lows. We all know these times are what makes us stronger as we intellectualize what we're going through. However, we often find we have limited skills and support systems to get us through these challenges we've never been faced with before.

Challenges are what make us better as humans and what elevate our skills. For the right person at the right time, with a little self-awareness, you can rise above and become even better than you were before—but only if you're ready. If you're still reading this first chapter, you may be one of those people who are ready, but are not convinced a book is going to help you. Your situation is unique, and people are

depending on you to find a solution. You have prided yourself on doing things alone and know intellectually that a book is not the answer.

However, I need you to pause and reflect because the intellectualization of your current situation is not going to serve you going forward. Maybe starting from a place of thinking versus doing might get you a different result. What was rewarded in the past for being a quick thinker and reacting to circumstances has become exhausting. You need a different plan, system, or support that moves the ship in a different direction and, more importantly, provides clarity amidst chaos.

Clarity amidst chaos—what do I mean by that? I mean being able to think clearly, see the bigger challenges and opportunities, and create a course that pulls you in a direction that is proactive instead of reactive. It's about taking control of how you navigate any challenges and perhaps avoid them in the future because you can see the big picture. It is that moment in time where you can see, think, and hear clearly. It is that deep breath during which you can feel the air clearing your mind.

I need you to take a deep breath and think about how you feel. I've learned that taking the time to simply acknowledge the energy you are feeling in your mind and body is one way of taking time for you. Not clearing your mind and quieting how you feel will not serve you. Think about what calms your mind. Is it reading a book, taking a walk, closing your eyes and nodding off, cooking, or perhaps exercise? I need you to schedule some of that time for yourself and put this book down. Come back when you are in a calmer place and not thinking about your current challenge.

I have found that quieting how you feel and relieving some of the stress is the first step in taking the time to think and be open to new ideas about your challenges. By the way, we don't start with the challenge you have in front of you—we start from a place of understanding how you feel and what guides you. We need to go back to the core of who you are and what has provided you success in the past. We need to embrace who you are and bring you back to a place of realizing your gifts and talents before moving forward. Only when you start by pausing and reflecting about yourself can you start the journey again and provide yourself with the compass to guide you on a different path.

The compass is my gift to you because I care about you. I understand the career challenges both firsthand and from seeing it in the eyes of the clients in front of me. I see your self-determination, but I also feel your doubt and stress. The CEO feels it stronger than anyone but because of the title "CEO" has to put on a façade. You may or may not have a CEO's title, but you are the head of a large entity or organization and have top-line accountability, and you need to succeed. It's about succeeding or be succeeded; no room for a performance improvement plan.

The compass is simply a tool that helps you find the direction you need to take. What makes the compass different from someone else's five-step plan is that you find all the answers versus being given a solution. When you give yourself the time and space to think and come to your own conclusions, the results are far more successful and

sustainable. You regain command of who you are and how you serve those who have elevated you to your leadership role. You regain your confidence because you do not have to change yourself, you simply have to find your compass to lead others through the challenge. New challenges will come all the time, but reverting back to simple navigation tools will guide you.

If you are at a point where you need support, a guide, and a compass, I ask that you put this book down to simply pause and reflect. Reflect on whether you are ready to trust yourself, think for yourself, and learn a few new things about yourself and how you interface with the world. If the answer is yes, commit to picking up this book tomorrow and reading the next chapter.

This book is not a quick fix, and it is not meant to be read too quickly. It's meant to get you to slow down and reflect. Take each chapter and sub-chapter and give yourself permission to pause and reflect on how each insight is relevant to your situation. Trust yourself and the process of going on this journey with yourself and then with the CEO's compass. When you, like a captain of a ship, can trust your compass to get through a storm, people around you will see this and trust you when the next challenge arises. I promise you that. Take a look at the questions below and internalize them. Absorb them with your mind and pick just one or two that pertain to you.

- What keeps you up at night? What worries you?
- Are you confident in yourself? How do you show this?
- Are you confident you have the capability and capacity to achieve your goals?

What do you think is missing? Is it your self-confidence or your ability to achieve your goals? What support do you need?