



INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER / EXPANDED SECOND EDITION

SYNCHRONICITY

THE INNER PATH OF LEADERSHIP

Introduction by Peter Senge

JOSEPH JAWORSKI

Praise for *Synchronicity*

"A deeply personal and moving narrative that opens up new vistas on compassion, commitment, and connectedness—and hence on leadership."

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"*Synchronicity* is a book that anyone serious about leadership will have to read."

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"*Synchronicity* illustrates that leadership is about the release of human possibilities, about enabling others to break free of limits—created organizationally or self-imposed. Although this book describes the author's personal journey, it contains profound messages about organizational learning and effectiveness."

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“I’ve spent my life writing about a new way to think and to be. Joe Jaworski has spent *his* living it. His deeply personal vision of Servant Leadership, nurtured by a courageous openness to love, to pain, and to his own and others’ experience, is told with a profound simplicity. *Synchronicity* touched deeply both my head and my heart.”

—**Danah Zohar, coauthor of *Spiritual Capital***

“No other book is like this one. Its gripping life stories punctuate a how-to on managing toward ‘predictable miracles’ by exploring your ‘cubic centimeters of chance.’ What a wake-up call!”

—**Tom Brown’s Top Ten Business Books of 1996**

“Joseph Jaworski pinpoints the astonishing encounters that manifested in his life when he followed his inner compass. Wise guides rose spontaneously; fate cleared blockages; love was caught in an airport passing; even an ermine communed eye to eye. Jaworski’s life story teaches us how to recognize and respond to our own moments of inner knowing and how these personal shifts can reverberate in the world.”

—**Lois Farfel Stark, American Leadership Forum Fellow and President, Stark Productions, Inc.**

Synchronicity

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JOSEPH JAWORSKI

BETTY SUE FLOWERS, EDITOR



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Synchronicity

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TO MY FATHER
WHO LED BY EXAMPLE

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the publication of the first edition of *Synchronicity*, I've been searching for the principles that lie at the heart of the phenomenon I described there—the capacity we have to sense and actualize emerging futures and to shape the future instead of simply responding to the forces at large. What is the *source* of our capacity to access the wisdom for action we need in the moment? How can we learn to enable that capacity, individually and collectively?

The answers to these questions were slowly revealed to me over a fifteen-year period. Because I feel adequate now to be explicit about what I've learned, I've added important material to this second edition, including four principles that lie at the heart of participating in the unfolding of the universe.

In the process of this search, I gave serious consideration to the Western scientific-materialistic worldview—our underlying belief system, which has prevailed in the West for over two hundred years. I believe that this belief system is no longer adequate for the issues our society is facing; that a historic shift is now occurring; and that a more comprehensive worldview is emerging. Institutions can play a leading role in enabling this emerging worldview.

At the time of writing the first edition, the most admired institutions were led by what Robert Greenleaf described as “servant leaders.” Scott Peck has referred to these as “Stage III” leaders. But I believe that a more advanced generation of institutions must be led by what I call “Stage IV” leaders. Stage IV leaders embody the characteristics and values of servant leaders but have matured to a more comprehensive and subtle level of development. They exhibit a capacity for extraordinary functioning and performance. At the heart of this kind of

performance is a capacity for accessing tacit knowing that can be used for breakthrough thinking, strategy formation, and innovation, including envisioning and creating the kind of institution or society we desire.

Stage IV leaders believe that there is an underlying intelligence within the universe that is capable of guiding us and preparing us for the futures we must create. They combine their cognitive understanding of the world around them with a strong personal sense of possibility—the possibility of actualizing hidden potentials lying dormant in the universe, a view that carries with it the power to change the world as we know it.

Institutions led by this quality of leadership, from line leaders to the very top, will, in my view, flourish in the decades to come. Because of their success, these institutions will become living examples of what is possible in the face of accelerating complexity and high turbulence. Operating from this new worldview, these living examples can play a major role in shifting the prevailing belief system.

I hope that this second edition will serve your own path toward higher stages of growth and development—and that it will also serve the leadership of your institution and of society as a whole.

Joseph Jaworski
Stowe, Vermont
November 2010

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

We've all had those perfect moments, when things come together in an almost unbelievable way, when events that could never be predicted, let alone controlled, remarkably seem to guide us along our path. The closest I've come to finding a word for what happens in these moments is "synchronicity." C. G. Jung's classic, "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," defines synchronicity as "a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved." In the beautiful flow of these moments, it seems as if we are being helped by hidden hands. I have often had such seemingly accidental experiences, both in business and in my personal life, and have always been highly intrigued by them, wondering how they occurred. Over the years my curiosity has grown, particularly about how these experiences occur *collectively* within a group or team of people. I have come to see this as the most subtle territory of leadership, creating the conditions for "predictable miracles."

My quest to understand synchronicity arose out of a series of events in my life that led me into a process of inner transformation. As a result of this transformation I decided to follow a dream that I had held close to my heart for a number of years. It was the most difficult decision I had ever made, but the day I made it, I crossed a threshold. From that moment on, what happened to me had the most mysterious quality about it. Things began falling into place almost effortlessly, and I began to discover remarkable people who were to provide crucial assistance to me. This lasted for over a year. Then I lost the flow and almost destroyed the dream I had worked so hard to establish. Ultimately I regained the capacity to participate in what I later came to understand as an unfolding creative order.

These experiences led me to search for the meaning behind extraordinary moments in time. Why did so many doors open for me after I crossed the threshold? How did I lose the capacity to create the future I had envisioned? How did I regain that capacity? What principles could be discerned from these experiences? If this dynamic occurs in individuals, why can't it occur collectively in organizations and even societies as well? What qualities of leadership could inspire this dynamic to occur?

I am the first to acknowledge that in attempting to address these questions we are exploring the frontiers of human knowledge, and that whatever is said here is only a beginning. But this is the story of my personal journey in search of the answers to those questions, and of my inner transformation along the way. I invite you to take that journey with me. Along the way, you will meet some of the people who are leading the renaissance now occurring in many disciplines: philosophy, physics, neurobiology, leadership theory, and organizational learning. These people are breaking the boundaries between disparate disciplines and transforming them at their farthest reaches—where for me they all converge, leading to a deeper understanding of how human beings, both individually and collectively, might develop the capacity to see what wants to emerge in this world and thus have the opportunity to shape the future instead of simply responding to the forces at large.

This book is organized in four parts that track the journey Joseph Campbell describes in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell presents a composite picture of the heroic quest, which is an archetype of the change process humans and, I suggest, organizations alike can pass through. Even though this is my story, I don't intend it to be an autobiography. To the contrary, it's intended to be everybody's story; that's why I've referred to my family members—who have played such crucial roles in my own journey—only when it is essential to the story itself. As Campbell pointed out, the hero's journey is the journey of any of us who elect to search for our true destiny. It reflects the inevitable passages we encounter as we discover how to create the future. We hardly have the language to describe the fundamental shift of mind that permits us to participate in this unfolding creative order. A story is the most powerful way, indeed, the *only* way I know to begin.

I have intentionally written this book in a way to embody the journey itself, so that the earlier chapters represent the level of consciousness I experienced at that particular point in time. The best way I know to carry the reader into the journey

itself is to echo for the reader what I was actually experiencing. I struggled with this decision because some of the incidents in the earlier chapters are not very flattering. Yet all of our experiences form an essential part of our developmental path, helping to shape us into what we are in the process of becoming. In that sense, as I look back, I am less judgmental about those earlier days. I encourage you to do likewise as you consider your own journey.

The story begins with “Preparing to Journey,” a description of the inauthentic life and the call to adventure, which comes in many ways, both subtle and explicit. It is the call to become what we were meant to become, the call to achieve our vital design. Part Two, “Crossing the Threshold,” describes the moment of decision, when we say “yes” to the call to adventure. If we have truly committed to follow our dream, we will find that a powerful force exists beyond ourselves and our conscious will, a force that helps us along the way, nurturing our quest and transformation. Part Three tells of “The Hero’s Journey,” the inevitable supreme ordeal that tests our commitment to the direction we have taken and offers us the opportunity to learn from our failures. The final section, “The Gift,” describes the story of the quest accomplished and what it has brought both to individuals and to society as a whole. Here I describe the process of transformation on the journey.

Peter Senge’s introduction is designed to be a sort of road map for the reader. Senge is the author of the pathbreaking book, *The Fifth Discipline*, which caused a worldwide groundswell of interest in learning organizations. For the past fifteen years, Senge and a number of his colleagues at MIT have been working to understand how to move organizations along the path of learning. They believe that the essence of a learning organization involves not only the development of new capacities, but also fundamental shifts of mind, individually and collectively—the very shifts that are the subject of this book. Nothing of real substance happens, they say, without this kind of transformation. Given this interest in transformation and how it can be most effectively led, it seemed appropriate to ask Peter to write the introduction. I also had a more personal reason for requesting this of him. As Peter explains in the introduction, he was deeply involved in helping me to write the book, and he was present with me almost the entire time as I made the journey toward wholeness that I describe within these pages.

It only remains for me to tell you about the serious reservations I have had about writing and publishing this book. How could I begin to tell others about the journey

toward personal transformation when I find myself so often caught in my own shortcomings? I found a great deal of comfort in reading Henri J. M. Nouwen's book *Reaching Out*. Nouwen said that for a long time he hesitated to write that book, but that he had found consolation and encouragement in the words of seventh-century ascetic, John of the Ladder:

If some are still dominated by their former bad habits, and yet can teach by mere words, let them teach. . . . For perhaps, by being put to shame by their own words, they will eventually begin to practice what they teach.

I hope that this book will serve you in your own personal transformation and that you will come to an even deeper understanding than is revealed here of how these predictable miracles might occur in your life, in the leadership of your organization, and in society as a whole.

Joseph Jaworski
Hamilton, Massachusetts
February 1996

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book traces a journey that spans four decades of my life. Along the way, I have met the most remarkable people who added important new dimensions to my understanding and to my life. Many are mentioned among the pages of this book, but others are not. To all of them, I express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude.

I owe an additional debt of gratitude to many others:

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INTRODUCTION

by Peter Senge

TELLING A STORY

For many years I have told people that, although there are a lot of books on leadership, there is only one that serious students have to read—*Servant Leadership* by Robert K. Greenleaf. Most recent books on leadership have been about what leaders do and how they operate, why the world makes life difficult for them, and what organizations must do in order to better develop leaders. These books are packed with seemingly practical advice about what individuals and organizations should do differently. Yet few penetrate to deeper insights into the nature of real leadership. By contrast, Greenleaf invites people to consider a domain of leadership grounded in a state of being, not doing. He says that the first and most important choice a leader makes is the choice to serve, without which one's capacity to lead is profoundly limited. That choice is not an action in the normal sense—it's not something you do, but an expression of your being.

This, too, is a book that anyone who is serious about leadership will have to read. *Synchronicity* builds directly on Greenleaf's thinking and goes further, especially in illuminating the nature of the choice to lead and the deep understanding or worldview out of which such a choice might arise.

For Greenleaf, being a leader has to do with the relationship between the leader and the led. *Only* when the choice to serve undergirds the moral formation of leaders does the hierarchical power that separates the leader and those led not corrupt. Hierarchies are not inherently bad, despite the bad press they receive today.