



EPISODE 12: PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

BOOT UP YOUR INNER GAME:

BOB ANDERSON

FOUNDER, THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE PROFILE

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*“The Creative half is run out of passion and purpose and a vision and is about bringing into being what I care and becoming who I most desire to be as a leader. That’s the Creative half. It’s about bringing into being. The Reactive half is about responding to problems, fears and threats. You can’t create the kind of agile, adaptive, innovative, engaged workplaces that we are trying to construct in order to thrive in a **VUCA** world. You literally can’t create those cultures and systems and structures from a Reactive leadership mindset. They won’t boot-up.”*

Bob Anderson

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:48] LM: Welcome to Rise Leaders Radio. This podcast focuses on exemplary leadership. The type of leadership that brings about positive, meaningful change in places that matter. We explore how these leaders make things happen and the lessons they learned along the way. I’m your host, LeeAnn Mallory.

Leaders who lead from a creative, vision or outcome-based orientation outperform those who lead from a reactive orientation focused on problems and motivated by fear. No question.

Bob Anderson is the creator of the **Leadership Circle Profile**, a groundbreaking 360 leadership assessment. We recorded this call on February 21st, 2020. The date is significant because the **coronavirus** had not yet reached pandemic status and there were no detected cases of community spread in the US. We don’t speak at all of the crisis in our interview and listening today it seems a bit tone-deaf. As you listen, I invite you to place the conversation in the context of the incredibly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous [VUCA] environment we’re living in.

Throughout the conversation, Bob talks about practices he personally engages in to deepen his own development. I've taken the liberty to document my version of those and I've provided a link to them in the episode notes and on my website at www.rise-leaders.com/podcast.

I met Bob in his living room in 2004 where he would conduct the certifications for the Leadership Circle Profile 360. There were about 8 of us in the room. Today, the **Full Circle Group** certifies around 800 coaches a year, has over 200,000 profiles in their database and the tool is translated into 15 languages. The 360 provides feedback that can result in a deep dive and sustainable change. It's based on a strong foundation of research in leadership, psychology, adult development theory and much more.

We spend most of our time in this interview on the **Creative and Reactive dimensions of the model** and on the latest findings gathered from a database of write-in comments provided when leaders rate other leaders. Bob and Bill Adams' latest book, *Scaling Leadership*, is based on this provocative data. The conversation picks up as Bob begins describing the model.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:03:57] BA: Well, I started my own career really in the early '80s, and pretty quickly I began to notice the field was a random collection of really great stuff, a lot of research, a lot of great theories, models, frameworks that were really helpful, but completely un-integrated and I spent 20 years, trying to figure out how all that fit together. When it did, it came together, I built the assessment.

Underneath the assessment is a very thoroughly, and very integrated model of the best of the field of leadership and psychology and spirituality and how it all plays out in our field. This assessment is a way of plugging people into that model and giving people a sense for, *where am I?* in a very thorough model of what makes for an effective leader.

I mean, there are a lot we could say here, but there are two basic really big frames in this. One is the vertical dimension of the profile. It's laid out on a circle. We're getting to what the vertical top half of the circle is *Creative*, bottom half is *Reactive*.

The top half is a set of kind of a distillation of all the various competencies. There's 18 different key competencies up there that we know from lots of research are highly correlated to leadership effectiveness and business performance. You get a lot of feedback on that. Then on the bottom half are Reactive tendencies or behaviors. These are behaviors we turn to under stress. They're default settings.

I was talking with the Chief Operating Officer of a large financial company and they're doing a lot of work with the Leadership Circle Profile now and he says, "When I feel really under pressure, when the pressure is on, I take over the project." I've got some higher scores on *autocratic* and *arrogance* as a result of that. We had a nice conversation about that. So that would be an example of a Reactive tendency. Under threat, under pressure, we tend to move toward really habitual behaviors that we're really good at, they're strengths but we run them out of fear, and we tend to overplay them or play them in wrong situations, and that has liabilities associated with it.

Everything in the top half is highly correlated to effectiveness. Everything in the bottom half is inversely correlated to effectiveness or highly correlated to ineffectiveness as a leader. That's the basic frame.

[00:06:28] LM: One of the things that I appreciate about how you frame this up is that bottom half aren't necessarily weaknesses.

[00:06:36] BA: Not at all.

[00:06:37] LM: They're strengths. They're strengths that we're running through fear. That we do when our back's against the wall or whatever stressful situation as we define it is. They show up there.

[00:06:52] BA: Yup, and they're habitual. They often have us. In other words, we don't realize that we're either doing it or the degree to which we're doing it or the impact it's having on others.

I'll try to make a story really short. Five years into building my own business, I've got all these colleagues that I'm working with that are doing my work and that I'm using as subcontractors as I'm trying to scale the business. And one day I'm in my office, I'm all excited, because I got this new vision emerging and I'm writing it all down - distribution systems and all this stuff - I could see this big picture that could unfold.

I call this woman up, she's been associated with me for five years and I launch into it and about 10 minutes into it, she hasn't said a word. I go, "Barbara, you haven't said anything." She goes, "Yup." I said, "Well, I'm very excited about this." She goes, "I'm not." I said, "Really? Why not?" She said, "Well, Bob, it's your vision." "Yeah, I know it's my vision. But how come you've never - How come you're not excited about it?" She goes, "Bob, think about it for a minute. In the five years of our relationship, have you ever asked me even once what I want as a result of my association with you?"

[00:08:04] LM: Ouch!

[00:08:05] BA: I mean that is what we call *authentic dialogue*. She didn't say it with anger, with an edge. It was just like, "Here's my experience of working with you."

I'm out there talking about empowerment, involvement, all these different ways of... - I go, "Oh my gosh! She just got me." I sat down - and this is key to the underpinnings of the Reactive. I sat down and I was really angry. I sat down and I wrote - I started to write down everything I was saying to myself in that anger and I heard myself say things like, "Why would I turn over to the business to the likes of them? They don't know how to run a business. They'd run it into the ground. My financial future is all tied up in this business." I just went on and on and on, and of course it's a slippery slope, a very slippery slope to failure and there's no way I'm going to let go of the reins of this business.

Then I looked at all that and I went, "I'm as controlling, as multi-controlling a manager as I consult to. I'm out there championing involvement and running my business like, no way would I let go". That's a case of a strength. I'm really good at driving results. But it's got me, because I do believe - especially if I wanted to scale my business and grow it - I had to build relationships of common purpose and alignment, which I wasn't doing. We weren't even having the conversation! That's a good case of a strength being overused, but underneath it is the fear of failure. If I really let go and if I really... then this thing could blow up in my face.

[00:09:41] LM: What strength were you using, Bob, when you sat down and wrote and then came to the realization that that's what you were doing?

[00:09:51] BA: Yeah, that's the other side. That's the Creative. The Creative half is run out of passion and purpose and a vision, and one is about bringing into being what I care and becoming who I most desire to be as a leader. That's the Creative half. It's about bringing into being. The Reactive half is about responding to problems, fears and threats. There will always be problems, fears and threats,

but when we make up that it's too dangerous to speak up in the room all the time or if I always have to prove how smart I am or if I always have to be in control, that has liabilities associated with it.

I was acting out of the part of me, a very significant part of me, which cares about what I care about and it's here for some very specific things that I want to do with my life. That we would call Creative in general, but in this case would be one of our dimensions called High Achieving, which is purpose, vision, strategy, decisiveness and so on - execution of results. That's a very important component of leadership.

[00:10:57] LM: As you started reflecting, what I'm hearing is that another strength that you had worked on and had developed was self-awareness and the compassionate, relating side of yourself that allowed you to be able to reflect and learn something from this conversation with Barbara. So you started with that Achieving Results, but then what actually got you out of that trap was another set of competencies that you had worked on developing over the years as well.

[00:11:30] BA: One of the competencies, or set of competencies, at the top half has to do with self-awareness, and she really interrupted me with one of the competencies we call Authenticity, and she really interrupted me. What I know from our work is that underpinning any Reactive strategy, and there are three basic Reactive strategies:

- One, we play too small. We play careful and cautious. We seek harmony over the kind of conflict that often ensues when we really put forth what we're after as a leader, so that we call Complying.
- The other is what I was talking about, which is Controlling where we're overly driven to get results usually over the top of people, results over people.
- Then there's Protecting, which I mentioned, which is the Arrogance. I have all three. The Arrogance is where we're highly rational and we have a vested interest in proving to people how brilliant we are.

Any one of those, underneath it, goes right to the core of how we form our identity and some core operating beliefs and assumptions that define us. The basic equation under any Reactive strategy is, *my worth is in your hands*. Somehow you define me. How you see me is vitally important to how I see me. And I maintain that in certain ways: I'm the one who always gets results, or I'm the one who is nice and agreeable, or I'm the one who's super rational and brilliant. This defines me.

Well, any situation which threatens, that puts us under pressure and we tend to react. So even the thought of high involvement in my own business wasn't even a thought even though I'm out there talking about it. That's how defended I was around it. It's been quite a journey actually over years to allow more inclusion and to build an organization that can really scale through others.

[00:13:28] LM: I would imagine in entrepreneurial language or the founder-led organizations, this is also where we find the *founders trap* - that if they can't get out of those stories, the company can't scale. It cannot reach the next level if those fears or those stories are driving, and they've got that death grip on the reins of the business and don't include other people in that.

[00:13:57] BA: We see that a lot both in founders and senior leaders and organizations large and small where a brilliant, absolutely utterly brilliant, created-an-industry kind of leader is holding the entire creative process of the organization in what you described as a death grip. The backstory was the pipeline wasn't filled, competitors were catching up to their innovative positioning in the marketplace, and they were looking at a potentially catastrophic scenario if we couldn't get more creativity through this business. It all came down to a brilliant founder holding on, like my identity is...

it all runs through me. So this business defines me. I am the creative genius in this business. That can't scale. It just can't scale.

When we did our work for the book *Scaling Leadership*, when we looked at the top 10 strengths of highly Reactive leaders, this picture became utterly obvious. The top 10 strengths are technical, high genius level, you know, very bright, intellectual, good domain knowledge, creative in the sense of innovative ideas and stuff like that. These were the key strengths that define them. But they're also rated as the most ineffective leaders because when those strengths are foremost, you're trying to run the organization through your brilliance as opposed to scaling the brilliance of others, which is a whole different set of capabilities.

[00:15:21] LM: Name those three again, the technical –

[00:15:21] BA: The top 10 strengths, we did a research study where we sorted our database, like you mentioned, it's about 200,000 leaders around the world. We looked only at senior leaders in complex roles, large organizations around the world. Then we sorted it for highest Creative, top quartile, highest Creative/low Reactive and high Reactive/low Creative. We had a really high Creative group of leaders and really high Reactive group of leaders.

Then we just read the comments and studied the comments and we turned it over to a research firm to do it, but they did what's called a content analysis and they literally sort all these comments into themes. What were the predominant strengths that emerged in this data that were described by leaders? This is leaders describing leaders. This is senior leaders describing, "Here's what makes you work. Here's what's really makes you effective and here's where you need to improve." That's a really rich conversation and nobody's ever studied it. Literally, I think I've not seen a study like this. This is leaders on leadership. It's a street view. It's no theory. It's just how many times did leaders say you're good with people or you're a good listener or you're good on technical skills?

The list for high Reactive leaders was all about their personal capability. They're smart. They're creative in terms of generating ideas and thinking outside of the box. They're brilliant. They're good on domain knowledge, good strategy drivers, all that stuff. What was really interesting about that though is the most effective leaders were rated the same. They had an equal number of comments.

[00:17:04] LM: Okay. Again, going back to what we were saying earlier, these aren't weaknesses.

[00:17:10] BA: They're strengths.

[00:17:11] LM: But they're strengths that are run through fear, and the highly effective leaders have those strengths as well as the strengths that other leaders would rate them as important to be effective.

[00:17:24] BA: Yes, exactly. Right.

[00:17:26] LM: Okay.

[00:17:26] BA: The highly effective, and Creative leaders had a very different set of strengths. They had all the other ones in equal measure, but they excelled at people, people, people and people. People, teams, developing people, listening, approachable. Six out of the top 10 most commented-on strengths for the highly effective Creative leader group had to do with people and teams and their ability to develop people and lead them well.

The next set of them was purpose, vision and authenticity, and that rounded out the top 10 list of the most effective leaders. Yes, they have their technical skills and their intellect and brilliance. You have to have that to play. That's table stakes. It doesn't define leadership, and it doesn't scale if you're trying to run your leadership through your own creative brilliance. It scales when you can develop that in others.

That's what I wasn't doing when she said, "Bob, have you ever once asked me ...?" This is a big deal. There are strengths with which we're identified. This creative brilliance defines me. Therefore, I hold on tight. This is what's got me here. It's what makes me effective. If I let it go, it's a slippery slope.

[00:18:41] LM: I can also have a lot of compassion for that.

[00:18:44] BA: Yes.

[00:18:45] LM: They're also – at some level, it makes perfect sense that you wouldn't want to let go of that. Yeah, if you really think that the big bad thing is going to happen, if you're not in control, if you don't have that death grip, then it makes sense that you would keep doing that.

[00:19:04] BA: Yup. We were working with a large organization walked into a coaching session, our debrief on the 360 and this guy - it's probably a Fortune 50 company - and 75% of the revenue reports to him. He just got a major promotion and probably twice to 3X-ed his level of responsibility. We walk into the office, he says, "Let me get one thing straight. I'm not going to hug you when you leave".

[00:19:30] LM: Okay.

[00:19:31] BA: We're like, "Well, yeah. Okay. Got that." Shortly into the conversation, he had really high scores on high Control, Autocratic, Arrogance, Critical and so on. Low scores on Relationship. He's one of these highly Reactive leaders. The conversation broke open when we said, "Well, it looks like it limits the scale on your leadership" He goes, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, how long are you working now? No. Really, how long are you working?" It was 24/7. I said, "You just 4X-ed your responsibility, 3X-ed your span of control here. You got 75% of the revenue. Your life Balance score here, which is how well you balance work and home life, is low. How are you going to scale? You're trying to scale through your own incredible brilliance." This guy was brilliant, and he was incredible. His superpower was being on top of everything. He could track everything. He was that smart, but he wasn't smart enough for the level of scale that he now had. And he got it and he got that, 'If I'm really going to grow into the next level of my leadership, I've got to do that through teams', and he's been working that ever since.

[00:20:33] LM: What were the other six? Do you have a list of all 10 of those or –

[00:20:39] BA: Yup.

[00:20:39] LM: Okay. Let me have them.

[00:20:41] BA: Which ones? The top 10 Reactive or Creative?

[00:20:44] LM: Let's hear the top 10 Creative. The top 10 Creative competencies.

[00:20:48] BA: Number one: Strong People Skills. 79% of leaders had three or more comments from their raters on *good with people* - 79%. Reactive, only 28% [rated *good with people*]. Think about that. That just sums it up. If you look at the list, Strong People [Skills], Visionary, Team Builder,

Personable/Approachable, Leads by Example. That's authenticity and integrity, right? Passion & Drive, that's purpose. Good Listener, Develops People, Empowers People, Positive Attitude. That's the top 10 list.

[00:21:22] LM: As those competencies grow, the styles or the tendencies on the bottom half tend to shrink. Is that right? It's not common to have, be high Reactive and high creative.

[00:21:37] BA: Correct. As you grow, you can work it from both ends as you begin to recognize a pattern like when Barbara interrupted me, I started working it and paying attention as I let go more, and that's one way. The other way is to grow those competencies and really focus 'on how do I become more of that'? More strategic? More visionary? Clearer on my purpose? Better at courageous, really hard conversations? Get better at that. How do I collaborate more effectively? A whole set of these key competencies which are well-researched to result in effectiveness.

But we can't grow one... if you think you can – that's why we've failed in leadership. If I think I can just do it from a skill level – I just need to go learn this skill and you don't work the fearful part of you, and the story you make up has you acting in other ways, then you won't get there. It's the combination of, 'I'm going to be more collaborative. I've really got to understand my arrogance'.

[00:22:40] LM: Just working to build the strengths you would say isn't enough. We really do have to address these Reactive tendencies and even why they're there, kind of get underneath.

[00:22:51] BA: Yup. You got to work the inner game and the outer game. The outer-game boots up on a more mature inner game. As you start to let yourself get interrupted, take in the feedback and work it and get to see how I'm showing up and the impact and get even underneath that and say, "Well, what's the story I'm making up or the set of assumptions that running that pattern pretty habitually?" That frees up a lot of space for the stuff that you're trying to create. That's one half the inner game. The other half of the inner game is getting really clear about what you're trying to create, why it matters, what kind of behaviors I need to get better at in order to really have the impact I want to have as a leader.

As you focus on what you want, you move toward it. As you unhook from old patterns, you move towards even more, in an accelerated rate, what you want and it's working both ends of that spectrum. That is what the Leadership Circle Profile was designed to facilitate, because you're going to have feedback on both ends of that spectrum.

[00:23:53] LM: Going back to the identity piece because that is at the core of the model, like literally, when you look at the model, identity is in the very, very center. You talked about identity and Reactive tendencies. What about identity and the Creative competencies? What's the relationship there? How do you describe that?

[00:24:19] BA: Well, identity in what **Bob Kegan** called Reactive leadership identity is *Socialized*. **Covey** called it *Dependent*. My sense of worth and security is outside me. It's in your hands. You make me up. I'm okay if you like me. I'm okay if I'm seen as brilliant and smart. I'm okay if I get perfect results. I'm defined from the outside-in. So the Reactive level of leadership, identity is externalized. We depend on outside validation for our sense of safety and self-esteem.

That shifts when we move to Creative and it shifts to being internalized. I'm less dependent as Covey would say, on you thinking highly of me or being seen as the one who gets results or being the smartest one in the room. I'm much more focused now on creating an organization, a culture, results, a future that I believe in and being an authentic version of that. If I want to create that kind of

organization, here's who I choose to be in order to expedite that - creating that reality. That's inside-out. That's internalized identity. I hold it now. You don't. I am becoming this authentic visionary, purpose-driven leader, and that defines me. This is who I am.

[00:25:45] LM: It is so interesting that I have never had these two conversations right next to each other where a few moments ago we were talking about the inner game running the outer game, and that to really grow your leadership effectiveness, you have to work the inner stories. Yet when we talked about the identity piece again, we're saying that moving from that inner game having us, which is being socially defined, to being self-authored, which is what people can see on the outside or being *Self-Authored*, in that I'm not being driven by what other people think, but what I want. I've never had these two conversations back to back where the internal and the external actually get flipped.

[00:26:38] BA: Yeah, and that's exactly why this is so powerful. The inner game runs the outer game, and the inner game goes through a transformation from you author me to I author me, *Self-Authored*.

[00:26:51] LM: I think it's interesting to talk a bit about the percentage of people... 80% of the world is estimated to be working from the Reactive, socially-defined mindset and only 20% on the other. It's mind-boggling. Are those statistics still true?

[00:27:16] BA: Yeah, they are. When you look at the adult development research, that's where that comes from - where they're assessing not how you're showing up in the workplace but how you construct your thinking, your meaning-making system, and that's a pretty sophisticated kind of assessment, but thoroughly validated. 80% of adults are still outside-in. There's phases within them that's maturing, but it doesn't really flip to fully self-authored until... only about 20% make that full flip.

The reason we think that's important to leadership is because we think the complexity of today's business environment, VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, all of those things. The turbulence and perturbation and disruption that we're always in now require Creative or higher. You can't create the kind of agile, adaptive, innovative, engaged workplaces that we are trying to construct in order to thrive in a VUCA world. You literally can't create those cultures and systems and structures from a Reactive leadership mindset. They won't boot up.

[00:28:26] LM: Well, if we just take a look around us, that 80% Reactive says a lot about the amount of mischief we have going on right now with, I would say, things like easy, binary answers to century-old problems. We want things to have a really easy, straightforward answer, and there is none. No matter what side you stand on, and I'm a huge advocate for things like living wages and pollution-free environment, and it's not a switch that I can flip. There is so much complexity in dealing with those kinds of issues, but I would love an easy answer.

[00:29:14] BA: Yeah, you see a lot of that now - trying to solve very complex problems with old, simpler solutions. They can't work. The very nature - we talked about identity; we haven't talked about other things that come along on when the inner game's maturing. One of them is from very black and white thinking. Right/wrong, black/white, to much more nuanced and much more complex, and where both sides can be right. How do we hold the truth of both sides even though they're in disagreement and really stay... I was talking about this with a Chief Operating Officer. He talks about, 'stay in the tension of the conversation' and allow the tension to work for you to create a higher order solution, which is going to be probably surprising to everybody that's in the conversation. We didn't have that solution coming in.

At earlier stages of development, you haven't the requisite - you haven't developed the requisite capacity to move beyond black and white thinking and really step into much more of a dialogue of

holding opposites in tension that allow for really high Creative solutions, and you have to be able to do that together. This is where collective effectiveness comes in. A lot of work is now around how do we help not you just become more individually effective, but this group of these leaders responsible for running the organization. How do they get more collectively effective? Where the collective intelligence is above the average intelligence. In most groups, this is in high Reactive groups, the collective intelligence is below the average intelligence. We come together and there are a pattern of interaction –

[00:30:52] LM: It gets worse.

[00:30:53] BA: We actually dumb down together. That is a recipe for *not* thriving in a highly complex volatile business you're learning.

[00:31:02] LM: And it makes me think of a question that I intended to ask you right off the bat. How did you get involved in leadership anyway? You're not just passionate about it. You're a little maniacal about getting the data and the research and seeing it from all different perspectives. It makes me think there's a core belief or assumption that you're working with about leadership and the world.

[00:31:35] BA: Yeah. Well, a couple of things. I've always cared deeply about the inner game both from a spiritual and a psychological perspective. Each of us is exquisite, an exquisite being. And how do we draw that forth and evolve it, to grow it, develop our ability to really be more and more fully who we are and more and more deployed towards creating outcomes that matter, being of service and so on. That's always been right core to me. I don't know why, but it has. Leaders feel like a place of leverage for me. Leadership matters to everything we hold dear. It matters to performance results. It matters to culture and whether people thrive or wither. It matters to the way systems get designed and whether they're efficient and effective, just leadership matters. The highest impact group in the organization is the top team and the organization is not going to perform at a higher level of performance than its senior leadership, period.

Given all that needs to change in the world, all that we're up against in the world, it feels like leadership that is really conscious and effective is essential right now. I feel some days like Schindler saying, 'how much I can do faster to help shift [this]?', and who's not a leader? Every one of us in context is a leader. Even as a follower I'm asked to lead, to speak up, to take a stand in the meeting for what matters or what we're trying to create or to hold us accountable to our values and so on. We're all asked to lead at whatever level. We just need more of that [inaudible] because we can't get there from here. The kind of BS that's happening in Washington right now, which is very highly polarized and reactive and binary and black and white literally won't get us there. Everybody knows.

[00:33:22] LM: Nobody gets off the hook with that no matter what political, however you identify yourself. It's happening across the board, I think.

[00:33:33] BA: Yeah.

[00:33:33] LM: I was telling you earlier before we started the call that I was with a group of North Texas public school administrators, and they are principals of schools that are breakthrough schools. You talked about VUCA ... the world that they're living with. There's just so much that they're being asked... We spent a lot of time on Reactive and Creative, and I can talk about that as if it's really simple, "Oh, you just move from Reactive to Creative." It ain't that easy, and we're doing a role play around a lot of drama and then how do you get out of it. One of the things that you've said reminded me of the conversation that we were having this morning around staying in the heat of the conversation. Not leaving the table. Not leaving the room but staying with it. Expanding what it is that

we want from the situation and finding some way that we can hook into something that we all believe in, that's worth fighting for.

[00:34:44] BA: What's bigger than what divides it? What even matters enough to pull together? That's alignment. That's where alignment happens. It's less in resolving conflict or the dysfunction in the room. I've had so many groups I worked where you walk in and they say, 'it's not possible. I know There's no way we're going to build trust to work in this organization', and half a day of having them talk about what they care about together and all of a sudden they're going, "We need to rethink that."

[00:35:09] LM: There may be hope.

[00:35:10] BA: I didn't know you cared about that. I thought I was the only one. The other thing I would say that when you were talking is there are moments in tough conversations where I really stop being scared and decide to show up, and then it gets very still inside and I'm not afraid at all. I don't know how this is going to go, there's a lot at stake. They may completely be disappointed in me. I don't know. All of a sudden, I'm at my best. Actually, I say what I really think needs to be said with no edge and no request or requirement that they change their mind or think different.

Somewhere in that new field that emerges, because all things change when we do. Someone in that new field, we reach a resolution or a reconciliation or a breakthrough and it's surprising. Like, 'okay, how do we get there from here? I don't know'.

[00:36:03] LM: It reminds me of the term, 'leave it all on the court' or 'leave it all on the field'. That terminology we're thinking about 'try your hardest, put your best effort out there, spend yourself'. In this situation, it's also don't hold anything back, but it's from a place of stillness and trust.

[00:36:27] BA: And flow. I think there's a flow state. Will Russell talked about that in one of his books where he said, 'I'm coughing up my lungs out there and I don't feel tired'. There is a place when you can step past all that jabber in your head, all that conditioning, and just a deeper, more authentic part of you just steps forward and it knows what to say and how to show up and what really is effective in some pretty tough situations.

[00:36:55] LM: The good news about that, we've all, I think, touched into it at some point, some way in our lives, whether it's in athletics, whether it's playing music, that we experienced flow. Now it's bringing that internal alignment into bigger arenas and tougher conversations.

[00:37:16] BA: I'm just working through one recently, pushing 65, and I'm still a very much a work in progress - in a conflict with one of my colleagues, partners. We don't need to get into the details, but it was hurtful for me and I think for him at times. I was thinking about it a lot while I was in Africa. I'm out on Safari, supposed to be enjoying this incredible natural wilderness and I'm thinking about this conflict. I'm noticing my needs to be right. It's like, "Are you kidding me?"

Then when I really dropped into it, I said, I noticed another layer – "I am trying to manage his respect for me. I want him to think highly of me". Wow. I don't need that. It doesn't matter if he does or he doesn't." Then I just came home, and we had very honest conversation with no edge. No requirement. Just, 'here's how I experience it. Here's what I want. Here's what I don't want going forward', and it was done. It was like there was no edge in either one of us.

When we step past one of those, core organizing stuff that goes way back, here I am still working on people thinking highly of me. Well, that doesn't have to be there anymore. It's okay if he doesn't. It's

really okay. Then I can just show up without blaming him or attacking him or trying to convince him or change his mind about it or anything and just have the conversation. It turned out to be a really good conversation.

[00:38:47] LM: Thank you for sharing that and a lot of grace and a great reminder that really the works never done.

[00:38:54] BA: No.

[00:38:54] LM: We just peel the onion back a little bit further, get to something that's a little deeper in there. I do wonder if you have a – I don't want to ask the question like it's a silver bullet here, but I know that in the *Scaling Leadership* book that in order to scale leadership, the first thing is *start with yourself*. Is there a practice or a set of practices that you would recommend for anybody that will help them get to this place that you were able to get to where you realized that, 'I'm still working this thing for respect'. Is there something that you would advise?

[00:39:37] BA: Yeah, I've talked about them. What's bigger than my fear? What do I care about? I have the practice of reflecting in my life's purpose in pretty practical ways. Part of what I was doing in Africa was I was doing a thought experiment where I said, "I'm 65. There's no guarantee I'm going to be here in 10 years. Let me assume for a minute that I only have five more years, and they'll be good years, but five years. I'm going to be on my deathbed and I'm going to feel complete and ready to go. Who do I want to be and what do I want yet to contribute in order for that to be the case?"

One practice is – Then it's like, "Okay. Then what are the objectives? Write down how do I need to organize my day in order to accomplish that?" This whole practice of what do I really want? What am I trying to become, create? Who do I need to *be* in order to do that? is one practice. Many levels to that but it's not very complicated. That's a usual question. What must I be about and create or become if I really am going to live the life I came here to live? Oh! Then what does that mean in terms of results I'm going to pursue? What does that mean in terms of daily activity or practice or how I need to reorganize my day?"

Then the next thing would be how do you get underneath your doubts and fears that hold you back that have you, that keep you pointing the old pattern or game? How do you get underneath that? Like I mentioned a number of them for me, because that frees up tremendous amounts of spaciousness or whom you're trying to create yourself.

[00:41:09] LM: On one sense, it's the path of mastery, and the other side of the path of mastery is this inner game. What is it that comes up for me that gets in my way or it's a fear story that I tell myself that gets in the way of this mastery? It's the side that we don't talk about much.

Bob, I'm going to go ahead and start bringing us to a close here, and I know that Leadership Circle Profile, the Full Circle group, you all just have so many things that you're offering and so much going on right now. Other than pointing people to your website, is there something else that you want to make sure that people know or can get access to?

[00:41:55] BA: Not really. I mean our [website](#), all these would be there. But I think the two books that – One you've mentioned, we've mentioned *Scaling Leadership*, and the book before that is *Mastering Leadership* and around both of those books in our conversation. Then there're some position papers that I've written over years on the site too.

[00:42:13] LM: I can attest to the resources there, and when *Mastering Leadership* came out a few years ago, it took me a while actually to get through that book because I was making so many notes; every paragraph had me thinking about something else. So I agree. Both of those books are incredibly practical and written in a way that it's really easy - you don't have to contort your brain to understand anything that's being said there. It's pretty simple wisdom.

[00:42:46] BA: Thank you.

[00:42:47] LM: You're welcome. Well, thank you, Bob, so much for your time today. It's been beautiful to be reconnected with you again. For the work that you're doing in the world and all the energy and effort that you're putting into it, I really appreciate it.

[00:43:03] BA: You're welcome, and great to be with you. It's been many years of being [inaudible].

[00:43:09] LM: And many more. Many more.

[00:43:11] BA: Way more than five.

[00:43:14] LM: That's right. All right.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:43:22] LM: If you like what you heard today and the direction this podcast is pointed, [subscribe to Rise Leaders Radio on iTunes](#). Leave us a comment a five-star rating. You can also check out the Rise Leaders' website at www.rise-leaders.com to find the resources I pull from in my coaching and consulting work and that I find central to transformative leadership. If you're committed to leading with a clear vision and from core values and taking your team to the next level, then get in touch. You can reach me, LeeAnn Mallory, from my website. I'd be honored to hear from you.

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[END]