



Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

The Unity of Leadership & Development as a new maxim
for Leadership Development in the Fourth Epoch.

04

SERIES ONE | PAPER 4

Dr Philip Hayton & Cyril Legrand



**Wisdom-Based Leadership
taps into the core of our
humanness, giving leaders
a fresh way to thrive.**

Introduction

Welcome to the final paper in Series One, CFL's first thought leadership publications.

Series One introduces you to Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ (WBLD). It explains the contexts that make Leadership Wisdom a relevant focus for leaders today and in future. It has asserted that Leadership Wisdom is a 'must have', not a 'nice-to-have', objective.

The series of papers produces a storyline, making the subtlety of our approach simple. We thus recommend reading them in sequence (if you're new to the series, start at Paper One).

PAPER ONE

The role of context in leadership development.

This paper explored the role of Context in LD and introduced our unique context model, the Four Contexts of Transformation™, which forms part of our approach.

PAPER TWO

The impact of four Global Epochs on leadership.

This paper looked at how the Fourth Industrial Epoch is now shaping our world and how people live, lead, contribute, and grow in organisations in this Transformation Age.

PAPER THREE

The paradigms informing the Four Frontiers of Leadership Development™

This paper presented the Four Paradigms of Development™ and how they inform Four Frontiers of Leadership Development™ and a new frontier now emerging in LD consulting.

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ is a new, relevant, and foundational response to today's hyper-complex world, empowering you to lead your own life and learning for good.

It demonstrates how leadership, and its development can tap into more of your humanness.

PAPER FOUR

This paper – completes the series.

It brings our discussion about Global Epochs, Paradigms of Development, Frontiers of LD Consulting, and so on to a natural conclusion. It focuses on the 'red thread' connecting all the dots – the relationship between Leadership and Development. We end the paper with fifteen FAQs about our approach to this work.

You will gradually learn more about Leadership Wisdom in Action™ – the major focus and key outcome of a Wisdom Based Leadership Development (WBLD). This is what sets Companions for Leadership (CFL) apart as a global leadership development provider in a hyper-complex Fourth Epoch world. We have a unique and well-differentiated portfolio for leaders, teams, and organisations to thrive now and into an uncertain future.

We hope you enjoy this final paper of Series One. We are delighted to have you with us.

The importance of a new Leadership Development approach for a Fourth Epoch

In Series One, we have put forward strong reasons for a truly fresh leadership development approach to meet the opportunities of the Fourth Industrial Epoch.

The Fourth Industrial Epoch is characterised by **mass inter-relatedness and rapid technological advancement**, creating a hyper-complex environment with unprecedented challenges for leaders. This epoch marks a significant shift from previous eras, where the focus was more on production, information, or skills.

Series One has highlighted how leaders in this new epoch face **constant multi-layered transformations**, requiring them to navigate a global context in real-time. This is very different from previous eras of leadership, which required a different set of skills. Traditional leadership development methods, often rooted in earlier industrial paradigms, are insufficient to address the unique demands of this new era.

As we have shown, the **pace and complexity of change are also exponentially greater** in the Fourth Epoch. Leaders are often required to operate outside the bounds of normal human functioning, which can lead to chronic stress, over-stimulation, and burnout. This means that strategies for self-care and resilience are key to successful leadership.

The Fourth Epoch uses a new paradigm of development, empowering leaders to lead their own growth, and not depend on external experts.

Another key shift is the move from **inter-connectedness to inter-relationship**. Global networks are no longer simply connected; they are in relationship. This shift means that leaders need to develop a new capacity for leading while in continual global, multi-systemic relationships. This requires them to understand the dynamics of human interaction as well as organisational structures.



For these reasons, **a transformational capability is no longer a ‘nice to have’ but a ‘must have’** for leaders in the Fourth Epoch. Hence, leadership development must help leaders cultivate an ongoing relationship to transformation, not just acquire skills or knowledge.

Our new approach, **Wisdom-Based Leadership Development (WBLD)**, is designed to help leaders meet their contexts by helping them access their innate wisdom, develop their own relationship to transformation, and align their personal growth with their leadership and organisational goals. It recognises the need to **integrate the human dimension** into leadership development, which was rarely truly central in Third Epoch approaches.

The Fourth Epoch uses a **new paradigm of development**, empowering leaders to lead their own growth, and not depend on external experts to prescribe their pathway to it. The resulting approach is human-centred, relevant, rapid and empowering, providing leaders with key tools they need to thrive in the new epoch. We have found that unless this is achieved then there is a risk that leaders may increasingly burn out or fade out.

In summary, the Fourth Epoch presents a great shift in leadership development. An approach like WBLD equips leaders to navigate an emerging world with fresh energy.



In this new era, a leader's core responsibility is development—of themselves, their people, and their system.

A Wisdom-Based approach to Leadership Development

As we have said, Leadership Development must access more of our ourselves – as humans. As *homo sapiens*, this inherently means accessing more of our inner wisdom. Leaders who don't know what this means or how to do it may struggle with limited access to the full capacity and resource they need to be effective and resilient in such complex environments. This, in part, involves both Caring & Daring™ at the same time.

It is easy to see **Leadership** and **Development** as essentially **two sides of a single coin**: development is no longer what leaders need to do occasionally. It what true Leadership IS. This central proposition must inform ALL Leadership Development activity. Leaders will meet today's contextual challenges effectively if the two sides of the coin operate as one – and **Leadership Wisdom** is a deep, powerful, easy way to unify Leadership and Development.

Thus, Leadership Wisdom in Action™ is extremely relevant for today's leadership roles and teams. Your **natural aptitude for development** is the very heart of your leadership journey.

It empowers everything: your leadership, team culture, and organisational performance. One area that it develops is a **new understanding of, and ability to drive, transformation**¹, especially in contexts of rapid change, transition, or organisational transformation projects. Leaders can naturally develop a relationship to transformation and growth, inside and out.

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ (WBLD) is thus built for that key objective, so that leaders can survive and thrive in today's Fourth Epoch world – this Transformation Age². Organisations whose leaders seek transformational results must empower their leaders and managers to **understand transformation from the inside-out** – to **live it** to be able to **lead it**, while holding and navigating its twists and turns fluently, resiliently, and ultimately healthily.

Such an approach is already empowering our clients: organisations and leaders of the future. Their relationship to inner transformation makes their leading in complexity more grounded, resourced, and authentic. Transformation cannot be a script or strategy because it has no single problem description or recipe to address it. It is always contextual, human, perceptual, and shifting – shaped by chaotic forces and how you see and approach the world and tasks. And in this Transformation Age, the sheer pace of change makes leadership 'hyper-complex'.

We have suggested that knowing how to transform inside and out is a key capability in the Transformation Age. But what is that transformation like? What transforms on the inside?

To really get an answer to this, you must experience our work. But here are some areas in which people experience lasting transformation in their leadership via their innate wisdom.

¹ 90.7% of participants from a Top 80 Senior Leaders Transforming Leadership from Within™ (TLW) journey responded: "The leadership journey helped me understand and deepen my relationship to 'transformation', starting with me."

² The Transformation Age is briefly discussed in Paper Three.

How can accessing your innate wisdom transform your own leadership journey?

As life shifts, morphs, and is transforming at an exponential rate, many highly skilled people find they struggle to grow at a pace, depth, and level of relevance that's fit for their context.

In other words, they find it hard to catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up in their worlds. When any (or all) these four processes feel out of reach, leadership is a very tough place to be.

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ transforms your leadership by making all four of these processes or experiences readily available.

Transforming your Leadership Journey

Developing and deepening your own relationship to transformation can help you to:

Catch up	<i>Escape subtle or chronic feelings of overwhelm</i>	Many leaders feel trapped in constant overload, struggling to keep up. Leadership Wisdom in Action™ opens mental clarity and resilience - helping leaders reclaim momentum rather than operate in survival mode.
Keep up	<i>Integrate Growth into Everyday Work, simply</i>	Development should not feel like an extra task but something that happens organically through daily leadership. Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ helps leaders access transformation naturally, within their existing roles and responsibilities.
Shape up	<i>Align Growth with Identity</i>	Leaders need to develop in a way that aligns with their unique strengths and personal values and qualities. Your own innate wisdom is the simplest doorway to the inner clarity and self-awareness you need. Authentic leadership can't be led by someone else.
Step up	<i>Lead development beyond yourself</i>	Leadership can empower others and shape a culture in which development is systemic. When leaders embody, grasp, and talk about Transformation , from the inside out, it permeates through teams and organisations, fostering a culture of relevance, meaning, and purposeful growth.

In short, Leadership Wisdom in Action™ helps you **catch up, keep up, shape up and step up**.

Let's look at each of these four transformational implications for leadership.

Catching Up is crucial in an exponentially changing world. Until you can catch up, you feel disconnected from yourself, your path, and your potential contributions. Your heart sinks. Constantly feeling behind the curve and ‘in the dark’ gnaws away at your confidence and self-esteem; eventually hope and inspiration. The result is a world of pain and overstretch.

The experience of Catch Up is the slowing down or ending of this nagging sense of strain and falling behind or losing your ground. Leadership Wisdom is a resource that creates energy and traction, enabling you to gather new momentum in your own development.

Keeping Up is vital to ensure ‘transformation’ isn’t a flare experience – a ‘flash in the pan’. Lasting change means not just making Herculean efforts to change your experience (such as by ‘catching up’) but finding it easier and easier to sustain your work, learning and growth.

The experience of Keeping Up created by accessing your leadership wisdom is more than just finding new momentum (although that is a wonderful experience for many people!) but discovering that transformation is in fact natural. In some ways it can be effortless. It is you. Transformational experiences as part of your development journeys become part of your everyday life and self, within the work you already do. You don’t have to ‘do extra’.

Shaping Up is of paramount importance because in the Fourth Epoch your human qualities are of the utmost relevance. In the Second or Third Epoch past, ‘shape up’ meant shaping yourself to meet your context pressures – becoming a more effective machine, in a sense! But today, shaping up means discovering your own shape – your own greatest resource: your humanness, unique talents, and ability to lead your own development every single day.

The experience of Shaping Up means becoming more yourself as you bring your inner development and growth to your leadership, learning, and relationships at work and elsewhere. Your own inner wisdom inherently deepens your relationship to your whole life. So, ‘shape up’ is no longer a harsh directive but a beautiful invitation to restore personhood.

Stepping Up is the fruition of the transformational process. Again, in earlier epochs, this phrase might have been taken to mean ‘go up a level’, as if growth were a computer game. But Stepping Up is far more valuable and sophisticated than some gamification trick. Rather, it means being able to identify, build, and lead your own development journeys in your own context, in your own ways, to thus address the needs of your role, team, and organisation.

And yet it goes further still. It means not only contributing meaningfully to transformative outcomes in the places you serve, but empowering others to transform their journeys too. In this way, Stepping Up isn’t about you gaming your way to growth. It’s about you serving the ongoing and natural transformational potential in your colleagues, teams, and world.



In short, the burnout/fade-out dilemma facing leaders isn't a wicked problem because there IS a way to resolve it. And it is only a 'no-win situation' if you cannot lead your own growth. As soon as your Leadership and Development come together as one, the no-win situation evaporates. Huge context pressures suddenly become contexts of transformation – and we have seen this happen for leaders and teams on countless occasions. Rather than walking into a fog of stress and meaninglessness nearly every day of your working life (adding to the toil and burnout already endemic in leadership today) you can tread a pathway of growth defined by you, led by you, and energising you and your development for good.

Yes, burnout is a 'growing problem': if you don't know how to grow, you'll face the problem. Just bring Leadership and Development together to find new pathways to transformation.

Organisations whose leaders seek transformational results must empower their leaders and managers to understand transformation from the inside-out.

The final section of this paper (before we conclude) will discuss what 'bringing Leadership and Development together into a single unified whole' means, and how you can do it too.

'Leadership is development, Development is leadership'. A maxim for the Fourth Epoch

Any leader's central responsibility today is Development

In an epoch of transformation leadership means growing yourself and others at least as deeply and as rapidly as the world itself is changing around you. None of the Third Epoch models and approaches to Leadership Development had this radical, single-minded focus.

We do. The Fourth Epoch demands it - an LD approach specifically designed to do just that. Leaders cannot afford to develop IN or TOWARDS a leadership role. A leader's core responsibility is **development itself** - of themselves, of other people, and of their system³.

If we're in a Transformation Age and you're not mastering its challenges, **are you leading?** You might be leading well now, without addressing this issue head on, but for how long can such effectiveness last in an exponentially transforming world? A few years ago, Barnes & Noble Inc sold 2 billion books a year. Amazon, just 16 million. But a few short years later...?

The world itself is changing – epoch changes happen just once every few generations. And the world that is emerging is defined, we say, by a new relationship to Development itself.

Leadership is development, and Development is leadership. Now, two sides of a one coin. That is why, in this series, we have discussed new Paradigms of Development, new frontiers in Leadership Development and an entirely new human-based approach leveraging Wisdom.

Leadership Wisdom is rooted in your **natural aptitude to develop**. Specifically, to develop your own relationship to transformation and growth. It empowers you to lead your own development journeys in service to natural growth and ongoing transformation. The crucial first step is to get to know what growth and transformation mean for you. You cannot do this if you are relying on someone else's model of what 'transformation' means or entails.

So, when we say Leadership Wisdom is 'innate' we mean just that. It is uniquely your own. Everyone has it as part of their humanness, but each person has a totally unique version. **Everyone has DNA – but your DNA is something that shapes how you are unique.** Your leadership wisdom is the same – we all have it, but we all have it uniquely. That is why we sometimes refer to leadership wisdom as your 'developmental DNA'. It is uniquely yours.

³ By the word 'system' we are not referring to bureaucratic systems but culture, process, and strategy.

CFL wants to help leaders differentiate their leadership journey, not become clones, or follow a spurious one-size-fits-all model of growth, development, or transformation. Your life and leadership can grow more adaptive, growthful, and energetically sustainable. *When your own relationship to transformation flourishes, in your own way, just as you are, then you can catch up, keep up, shape up, and step up* in spite of the contextual pressures you are under and the chaotic and transforming nature of our new epoch. At the very least, when you feel under less strain thanks to developing, you can function a little better!

Thus, your natural human aptitude to 'develop' is what Leadership Wisdom is all about. And one of the things it rapidly uncovers (often in a couple of days!) is that transformation itself is natural, simple, and rapid. Unlike life's hyper-complexity, your transformation is simple. Unlike old models that prescribe habits and practices, you can lead development yourself.

Today, your leadership wellbeing hinges on this aptitude. As you develop the ability to develop yourself in your own ways, you feel more present, alive, empowered, responsive. Indeed, the true source of transformation is aliveness. If you can 'grow as you go' in any context, your way, at your pace, you live a transformational experience every single day.

Leading your life in a growth-full way is a foundational insight for leadership. Embody it. Not only as a powerful antidote to burnout and overwhelm (it offers meaning and aliveness), but to gain greater access to the personal and professional resources you already have, thus unlocking potential to lead more effectively in more complex situations in an ongoing way.

The world itself is changing – epoch changes happen just once every few generations. And the world that is emerging is defined, we say, by a new relationship to Development itself.

So, it isn't just an antidote for depletion and pain; it changes what *transformation* means. It's no longer a new skill or capacity to learn from others. It's what you live – as *you* lead your life. As the world around you morphs and changes, you're equipped to meet it and win.

The take home message is simple: Leadership Wisdom in Action™ is a refreshingly vital and powerfully simple way to address today's major dilemmas for leaders and their development. It leverages your natural aptitude for development to bring growth and transformation alive.

Discover how you can embody this one, foundational leadership insight, today.

Let's look more closely at the central maxim and what it means to develop your leadership.

The central maxim may seem simple, but its implications are deep and wide-ranging. It says that leadership is inherently about development. It also says that development is inherently about leadership. It means they are two indivisible, inseparable parts of a single whole. And we have found **it changes the way you approach developing your own leadership.**

The Central Maxim

**Leadership is development
Development is leadership**

First of all, it means “leaders” are **people who know how to develop themselves and support development in others.** This has implications for how we define Leadership itself. In short, it compels a more radical interest in the human beings at the heart of all leading, and a greater level of interest in the relationship between people and their many contexts. Those contexts are what pressurise and can injure them, but can also be transformational.

Putting the Human Being in the middle – is it new and realistic?

A defining characteristic of a wisdom-based approach to leadership development is that it places each human being's needs and nature at the heart of the entire growth enterprise.

Is this new? And is it realistic?

Focusing on the human might sound crazy, inefficient, overly indulgent, or (worse) merely ideologically driven. Let us assure you, it is none of these. It just means an approach that is not guided primarily by an

expert prescription of the best must-have traits, skills, capacities, or capabilities you 'should' grow. The approach is not primarily driven by a one-size-fits-all theory or model of development or a patronising and homogenising single-factor solution (the so-called 'silver bullet'). If it were that simple, everyone would already be doing it. Rather than being 'preached to', this approach starts with you and empowers you to lead it.

Most importantly, **knowing how to lead your own growth** is the 'must-have' in this Epoch. But there's an implication easy to overlook or downplay – it means Leadership Development forces us to respect Human Development (a deeper, fuller relationship to your own growth).

But in this new approach – which is nothing if not common sense – there's a major problem. If every human being is unique, can we build one intervention to work for many/all leaders? Let's be frank, many approaches claim to 'start with the person' and work 'inside-out', but then don't and can't. Most programmes and approaches start with a theoretical focus – typically a single-factor narrow topic, such as Emotional Intelligence, Meaning-Making, or Regeneration Principles. Let's be clear, single approaches are valuable, useful, and can be generally well-regarded. But they pre-define the starting point, process, and outcome.

As a leader enters the programme, it has already been pre-determined what principles will guide their growth – provided by the wisdom of the model or facilitator, not the participant. So, the person is, by definition, made to fit the expert's and topic's focus. Yes, they might bring their own experiences to it. But that's not really the same as 'starting with the person'.

We are not the first to notice this problem, of course.

This problem (plus the complexity explosion of the Fourth Epoch) might be why we have not seen WBLD-type approaches in the Leadership Development industry to date. And until recently (post-Covid-19 perhaps), the urgency to solve this tricky problem wasn't 'hot' enough to be worth the effort. The platform just wasn't burning yet. But now it is raging... Every metric you wish to examine shows strain, stress and engagement are all in trouble. And the effectiveness of leadership development interventions has struggled to catch up (let alone keep up, shape up and step up). It is a challenge at the frontiers of the industry.

In response, an increasing number of leadership development professionals and agencies design unwieldy, comprehensive, 'multi-magic-bullet' programmes that integrate as many of the 'most important' topics, skills, and capacities as possible (in their opinion, that is). But they risk creating the very problems they claim to solve – they are too complex, demanding of time and energy, based on outsider wisdom, and driven by someone else's bright idea. Whose wisdom leads the whole process? How much capacity do leaders today have for it? Does it add overwhelm to overwhelm? Does it meet the human? Does it place them first? Even if a programme touches all the human dimensions, it doesn't make it a human process.

Narrow, topic-focused, outside-in leadership development is so much the norm since the onset of the Third Epoch, you might be reading this thinking 'isn't that how it *should* work?'. Historically yes. Approaches that tell you what capacities and capabilities you or your leaders need will always be narrow, topic-focused, expert-dependent, and gradualist (slow). Even old models of 'transformational leadership' typically present a timeline of many years to see a lasting transformational outcome. But that timeline can now be measured in weeks.

Hence, as a Fourth Epoch bull is loosed, cracks are appearing in the former frontiers of LD.

What is falling away, and where's the new energy coming from?

Put a single-topic approach before a metaphorical Fourth Epoch bull⁴, and how does it do? The ‘bull’ (Epoch) is no joke – a multi-factorial real-life context of continuous, full-spectrum, often chaotic transformation. Does the approach help you outrun it, or not? Is the single topic (or topic-by-topic) approach fast, broad, relevant, and digestible enough to enable you to respond as rapidly, fluidly, flexibly, and naturally as you need? And can you also learn, and not just survive the onslaught and hope for better, easier times in future to ‘recover’? The available data on LD industry effectiveness suggests that most of us are being outrun and overpowered by the ‘bull’ that is unleashed by the Fourth Epoch. It is unmatched.

The Fourth Epoch’s contextual challenges create a unique human dilemma – we must find a common language, experience, and approach that ‘fits’ the challenge and yet opens space for thinking, learning, and relevant responding so that meaningful development can occur. Rather than narrowing the focus to a single topic, we must expand it and start with YOU. The whole person you, who has unique qualities, aspirations, qualities and huge potential. And all of this can be brought into service of leading in your life, role, team, and context.

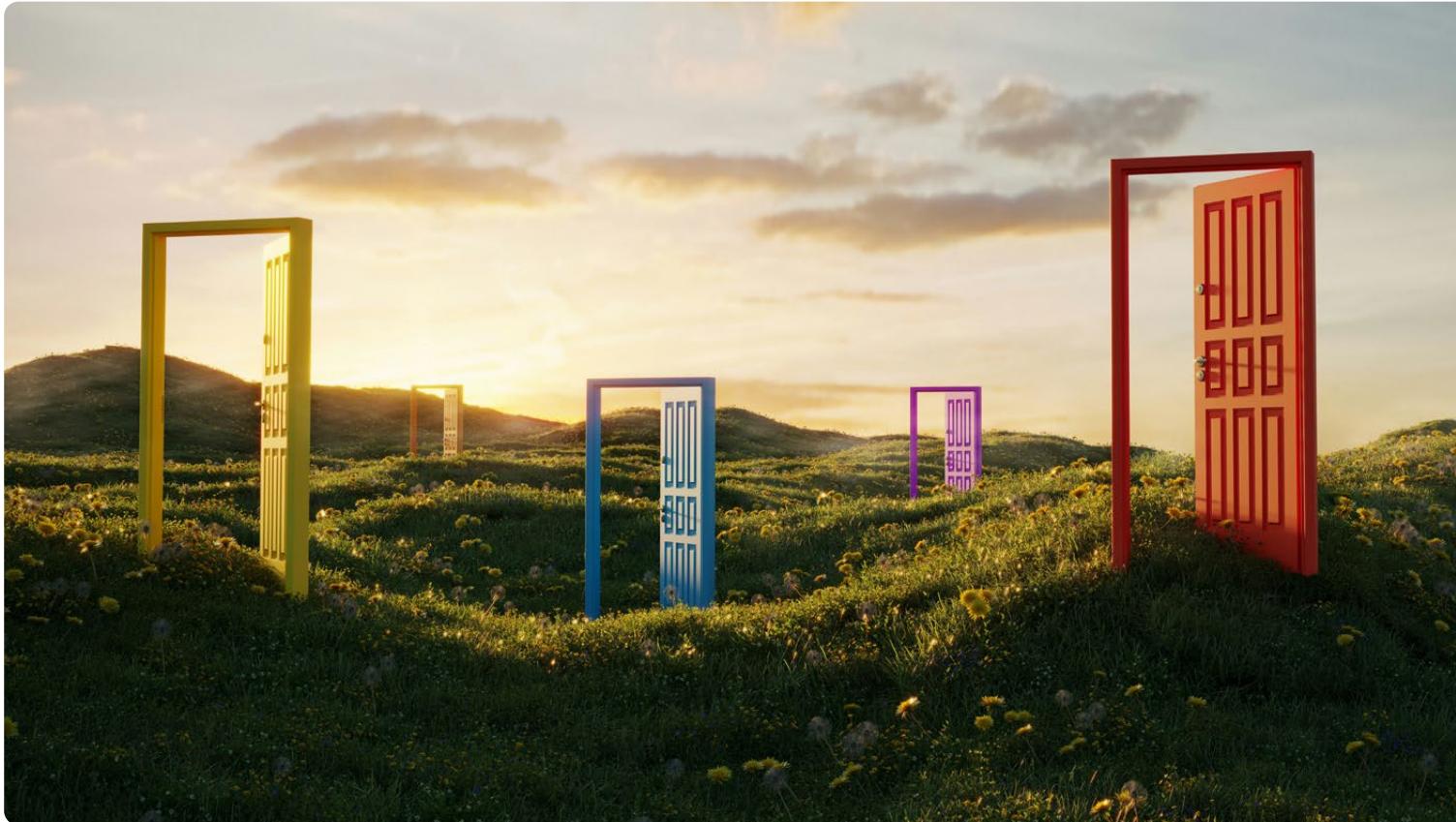
We say a WBLD approach is ‘uniquely fit for today’s context’ for this reason. It helps you not only survive the ‘bull run’ but thrive and grow in those same experiences. A WBLD approach brings simplicity and focus without turning narrow or ‘topic-based’. It isn’t a smorgasbord either, trying to be ‘human’ by touching every factor imaginable as a ‘multi-silver-bullet’.

By unlocking fresh access to your innate resources, full-spectrum growth results. This is what you need to meet the full-spectrum challenges of a Transformation Age ‘bull run’.

Leadership Wisdom – our core construct – isn’t a ‘topic’. It is the core of humanness. It can be defined (see Paper One) as a space or doorway to re-engage with your depth and power. A ‘space’ or ‘doorway’ is a visual metaphor for Leadership Wisdom. Rather than a topic to master, or a philosophy to argue about, it is simply a Way In – to you and all your contexts, and ultimately to the transformative relationships you can foster between you and them.

By unlocking fresh access to your innate resources, full-spectrum growth results. This is what you need to meet the ‘full-spectrum’ challenges of a Transformation Age ‘bull run’. Leadership Wisdom is a doorway to a deeper relationship to leading your life and growth.

⁴ See Paper Two on how the Fourth Epoch is changing the ways in which leaders must develop themselves.



To shift metaphors for a moment, you could think of a wisdom-based approach as a kind of gene therapy for leadership development, except the surgeon isn't the outside expert. The surgeon is you. You read your own DNA. You identify your focus. You lead the operation. In the process you discover something priceless: developmental confidence and competence. You discover it comes naturally. You already have an aptitude for this stuff! It's in who you are.

You discover in the process that you are the person best equipped to lead your life and growth: to lead your development, specifically of your relationship to transformation itself. Leadership Wisdom is our name (for good reasons) for this simple yet sophisticated process.

Undoing dependency and rebuilding confidence to grow yourself

In the old model inherited from the Third Epoch, other people told you (and led you) in what to grow, and how, and why. You gave away initiative by following their process. You grew dependent on the (possibly quite brilliant) developmental wisdom of others (which, by the way, is 'received wisdom' not Leadership Wisdom). You narrowed your focus to specific topics, most of which you did not know intimately (and perhaps never will). Not like you know yourself. For, no matter your limitations, no one will ever know you like you do.

After the class is over, without the expert's guidance, faced with an unpredictable 'bull run' tomorrow, how do you know what to do? What to grow? How to lead it, etc.? If you can say, hand-on-heart, that you're confident in your ability to grow yourself, your way, in context, we congratulate and salute you. You are among a tiny minority of leaders. But if, like so many leaders, you have more than a few doubts, we invite you to consider a new approach. We've seen how its simple, yet radical human-centred principles can make a real difference.

A radical human-focused leadership development approach is gentle, fresh, and energising. It works with leaders (you) as you are, empowering you to identify your most relevant focus for growth, enabling you to create your own authentic development journeys to lead (in your own ways, as you are), and thus cultivate a fresh, personal pathway to transformation⁵.

In our experience, this process is doubly empowering. Not only do leaders achieve specific goals that are most relevant and applicable to themselves, their needs, and their roles. They also – more importantly – deepen the most valuable leadership outcome of all. They learn not only how to lead themselves, but how to develop themselves in their leadership – **and what is more, they learn how to do this in entirely unique ways, which are all their own...** creating a level of confidence, ownership and transformational power that is hard to match.

Developing oneself is not merely a skill or the application of a theory. It is a relationship, and leadership wisdom-based leadership development is fundamentally about helping you build a deeper, broader, more enlivening relationship to your growth, and how you lead and live.

The fourth frontier is emerging, as a new paradigm of development emerges in a new epoch. It challenges the Leadership Development industry to revisit not just methods but its core assumptions and principles.

⁵ More than eighty per cent of top leaders surveyed said our flagship programme achieved this result for them.



In a hyper-complex
Fourth Epoch,
transformation is no
longer a ‘nice-to-have’ —
it’s a must.”

Summary

CFL's work is informed by a human-centred approach in which leaders rapidly rediscover a key aptitude inherent in their human nature, previously neglected in most other trainings: namely, an ability to develop in virtually any area they find important or relevant in role.

Many times, we find that these same learnings also transform people's lives at home too. The pathway to results starts within hours, days, and weeks... not years. And it really lasts. The potential unlocked create transformational outcomes that will enrich a whole lifetime.

The '**Leadership is development, Development is leadership**' maxim means leaders must be properly empowered and supported to create and lead their own growth. It means they use their resources and self-awareness to build their own development journeys which they can then lead and refine (and redefine), on the hoof, as they go. This is what it means to 'tame the bull' unleashed by a Fourth Epoch. Be part of transformation itself. It ensures adaptable, rapid growth in key areas with greater leadership confidence and skill.

The approach we are describing isn't just a new fire extinguisher for a burning platform. It is a way of harnessing that transformative potential for good – heat, light, warmth, growth. Just as pressure and weight can be engineered to create elevation and levity, so too a burning platform can ignite a spark of transformation in paradigms, approaches ... even leadership itself. A Fourth Epoch needs new organising principles to take leadership and the world forward to better places and towards healing and thus perhaps greater wholeness. Wisdom is a way, and Leadership Wisdom in Action™ is our prospectus for a better world. We've seen how well it works; how it meets and serves people where they are, as they are. We hope you will be able to enjoy that experience too and share it with those you'll serve.

Ultimately our invitation to leaders is not only to develop leadership but – more importantly – fully live it.

We look forward to sharing some of this journey with you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Brief replies to fifteen common questions people tend to ask about a WBLD approach.

1 **What is Wisdom-Based Leadership Development (WBLD)?**

WBLD is a new approach to leadership development that focuses on helping leaders access and develop their innate wisdom to navigate complex challenges and lead their own growth. It is a human-centred and practical approach that is relevant in today's VUCA/BANI world.

2 **Why is a new approach to leadership development needed?**

The world is changing rapidly with increased complexity and pressure on leaders, which often leads to burnout. Traditional methods are not enough to address these challenges. A new approach that aligns personal, leadership and organizational growth is required.

3 **What are the key elements of the WBLD approach?**

Key elements include:

- Recognizing the human dimension as critical to organizational transformation.
- Focusing on personal transformation alongside organizational transformation.
- Accessing and harnessing innate wisdom.
- Developing a relationship to transformation.

- Aligning human, leadership, and organizational development.
- Using context as a resource for growth, not just a source of pressure.

4 **What is "leadership wisdom"?**

Leadership wisdom is described as an innate human aptitude for growth and transformation. It is not something to be taught or given by another, but rather something that is innate within each person to be accessed and developed.

5 **What are the Four Contexts of Transformation™?**

This is a model to understand the different layers of context that influence leaders: **Environment** (wider context), **Ethos** (organizational and team context), **Expansion** (leadership capabilities), and **Energy** (human inner experience). These layers are always on and interact to affect a leaders-ability to perform and transform.

6 **What is the significance of the current Fourth Industrial Epoch?**

The Fourth Industrial Epoch is characterized by mass inter-relatedness and rapid technological advancement, requiring a new approach to leadership that emphasizes adaptability, sustainability, and a transformational capability. This is in contrast with previous epochs, which focused more on production or information.

7 How does WBLD address the issue of leadership burnout?

WBLD addresses burnout by helping leaders access inner energy and build resilience through developing a relationship to transformation and learning to use context as a source of growth.

8 What is a "Leadership Companion" and how is that different from another kind of leadership consulting role?

A Leadership Companion guides leaders on their own development journey, helping them access their own wisdom and build their own authentic path rather than prescribing a specific approach or only trying to 'advise' them. This is different from the more traditional role of a consultant as a 'technical expert' or 'trusted advisor'. In essence, the leadership companion stance is a relevant and refreshing approach to accompaniment.

9 What are the four paradigms of development?

The four paradigms of development are:

- **Ad Hoc:** Development is erratic and spontaneous, relying on a leader's character and instinct.
- **Skills-Based:** Development focuses on acquiring specific leadership skills.
- **Capacity-Based:** Development aims to build specific capacities for agile and adaptive leadership.
- **Human-Based:** Development focuses on unlocking an individual's innate aptitude for leading their own growth, which is at the root of the WBLD approach.

10 How does WBLD help leaders "grow as they go"?

WBLD empowers leaders to learn from their own experiences and to turn context pressures into opportunities for growth. It provides methods to 'grow as you go', meaning leaders can develop their awareness and key capacities as they navigate new challenges.

11 Is WBLD a 'one-size-fits-most' approach?

No, WBLD is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach; it recognizes that each leader is unique and helps them to develop a personalized path to growth. It also gives them a framework to help them adapt to their changing needs.

12 What does the concept of Perform & Transform™ mean?

'Perform & Transform™ refers to the ability of leaders to both deliver results and grow simultaneously. It comes when leaders can work with their own transformation in context, so they have the capability to help others lead their own transformation.

13 How does WBLD differ from traditional leadership development programs?

Traditional programs often impose external models or theories on leaders, whereas WBLD focuses on empowering leaders to lead their own development, leveraging their innate wisdom, and recognizing leadership as something that is inextricably linked with personal growth.

14 What are some key benefits of using a WBLD approach?

Key benefits include:

- Increased energy and motivation.
- Greater adaptability and resilience.
- More authentic and sustainable leadership.
- Aligned personal, leadership, and organizational growth.
- Rapid, relevant, and transformative outcomes.
- Empowered leaders who can lead their own growth.

15 What is the overall goal of WBLD?

The overall goal of WBLD is to create a new paradigm of leadership development that is fit for the complex challenges of today's world, empowering leaders to transform themselves, their organizations, and the wider world. WBLD also helps develop a new relationship to transformation and growth itself.

It is helping transform a new frontier in our industry.

Rather than walking into a fog of stress every day, you can tread a pathway of growth defined by you.

The Leadership Wisdom series

The first Leadership Wisdom series presents Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ as a relevant and compelling perspective on leadership, team, and organisational development today – it is not only fit for purpose, but also fit for today's context.

Sign up to our mailing list to receive our leadership papers at:
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Paper 3

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

How a new Paradigm of Development is reshaping Leadership Development.

Paper 4

Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™

The Unity of Leadership and Development as a new maxim for LD in the Fourth Epoch.



How can we serve you?

Companions For Leadership (CFL) has a diverse team of highly experienced leadership companions working globally at the frontiers of leadership development.

A new kind of Leadership & Organisational Development is needed that is fit for today's hyper-complex contexts – by being more energising, relevant, human, and powerful. This need informs our visionary Wisdom-Based Leadership Development™ approach for leaders and organisations of the future. Our pioneering approach is simple and accessible, rapid, and transformative for leaders today, even in the most demanding environments.

We are delighted to offer a well-differentiated portfolio of flagship programmes and bespoke support for leaders & organisations at a national, regional, and global level.

We empower Leadership Wisdom in Action™ a business-critical leadership aptitude for leaders and organisations to find and develop which is helping reshape the frontiers of our industry.

Get in touch

Discover how CFL can help you unlock energy, potential and transformation in yourself, your teams, and/or organisation.



Lasse Wrennmark

Founder & Leadership Companion

lasse.wrennmark@cflglobal.com

Lasse is a specialised consultant in culture change, leadership development, team building and executive coaching. He has devised a number of transformation and culture change projects, strategy & refocusing workshops, coach the coach programmes. Lasse is an appreciated keynote speaker in the field of leadership and change. His ability to engage an audience with his authentic style and story-telling ability has led him to speak around the world including with and for the Mexican Government and top leaders in the Attorney General Office.



Cyril Legrand

Founder & Leadership Companion

cyril.legrand@cflglobal.com

Cyril is a recognised global C-Suite consultant and executive coach on organisation/people transformation, transition & sustainable performance. For over 15 years, he has supported and worked with leaders and executive teams of multinational companies with business operations in complex multicultural and multidisciplinary environments. He champions self-discovery and continuous learning, embodying his philosophy of “collaborative action based on collective wisdom.” Cyril has created various successful leadership models and frameworks to support top executives to find their X-factor in order to better care and dare, rehumanising leadership and empowering their organisations to sustainably transform while performing.



Dr Philip Hayton AFBPsS

Partner & Leadership Companion

philip.hayton@cflglobal.com

A clinical and coaching psychologist, supervisor, researcher, and innovator in the leadership development space, and formerly a director and owner of the first ‘adult vertical development’ company, Philip leads innovation to empower transformation in Human and Leadership Development. As the (ageing) industry paradigm is so strongly rooted in applying someone else’s system to your own development, Philip works to build new, truly integral, inside-out approaches – essential in today’s accelerating, exponential world – and brings these to clients.



Transformation cannot be a script; it's always contextual, human, and shifting.”



Companions for Leadership is a pioneering leadership consultancy committed to making the world of organisations wiser, truly daring and caring for the whole. With a community of progressive and wisdom-based Leadership Companions, CFL supports large-scale leadership and culture interventions throughout organisations.

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