Preface

This is a book any leader could write and every leader should write—although it is not the book I had intended to write. I am not sure where most books come from, but this one wandered in the desert for about forty years. I had always wanted to write a book about my experience in Vietnam and the events leading up to and immediately following my time there. It was not going to be an action story of heroic combat—not that I would have omitted heroics if I had some to claim. But I can claim no heroics, and the combat that I experienced would not have filled enough pages to call it a book. It was to be more a "coming of age" tale—followed by the movie!

Shortly after returning from Vietnam at the end of 1970, I jotted down some notes, but then there was graduate school and a dissertation to research and write. Over the years, I added notes and threw them in a manila folder. I would say "placed" them in a folder, but the process was not that orderly—they were scraps of paper with scribbled phrases that I just tossed in. At first I kept them together with a paper clip on the folder, but over time I had to resort to increasingly larger binder clips.

In 1991–1992, I attended the U.S. Army War College. I went as a "geographic bachelor." I was serving as a tenured faculty member in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at West Point at the time and would be returning there after completing the nearly year-long program at the War College. Our youngest daughter, Emily, was in her senior year in high school, and after years of cramped quarters at West Point, we had been assigned a set that were more than acceptable. Maureen, my wife, was not interested in surrendering them, so I was off to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on my own.

My expectation was that during the down time after classes, while my fellow students were out drinking and playing golf or spending time with their families, I would write. I was able to complete only about twenty-eight pages. What down time I had I spent playing research assistant to my daughter Amy (who was a sophomore at Dickinson College in Carlisle), commuting back to West Point on weekends, and trying to keep up with the extensive reading prescribed for the War College courses. A number of my colleagues counseled me, "Jack, it's only a lot of reading if you do it," but I continued to make the effort. I quickly came to the conclusion that *the book* would give me something to do when I retired. The twenty-eight pages went into the folder.

In 2003, a few years after coming to IBM, I received a call from David Kappos—who at the time was IBM's vice president, assistant general counsel for intellectual property, but has since become Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. He had been a participant in one of IBM's leadership development programs for high-potential vice presidents, which I had facilitated. He asked whether I would talk at his worldwide organizational meeting, which was convening near IBM's headquarters in Armonk, New York, where I worked. I would be their dinner speaker. He wanted me to "talk about leadership"—not necessarily the IBM Leadership Framework, with which most attendees would already be familiar, just "leadership." Flattered that David had asked me to speak and being incapable of saying no to any request to speak, I agreed and hung up—clueless as to what I would talk about.

After letting David's request incubate for a while, I remembered my folder, took it out of my desk drawer at home, and jotted down nine or ten of the incidents that I had noted as learning experiences. My idea was to talk about what those experiences had taught me about leadership. I called it *Leadership and Other Things I Have Learned Along the Way*. The talk took about forty-five minutes. I basically recounted, more concisely, what you will find in the first few chapters of this book. The talk was well received, and they asked me back a year later. For the next three years, the talk sat on my computer.

In 2006, I was tasked with embedding business acumen into our executive leadership development programs. Having no expertise in the area, I retained an outside expert to help. One of the suggestions we thought worth pursuing was to broadcast podcasts to managers. We met with Stacy Spiegel and George Faulkner at corporate communications. At the time, Stacy was in charge of communications for managers, so we got talking about leadership development in general. Some of the things that I said resonated with George, who suggested we get various ideas on tape. We discussed possible options, and I remembered the dinner talk that I had given to IBM's IP lawyers and offered to break the talk up into ten five-minute podcasts. Several weeks later, George and I met in the recording studio in corporate headquarters, and in a marathon session we recorded ten separate podcasts.

The podcast idea was strictly a skunk works venture between George and me. George had to edit the tapes, and he did it in his free time. It took two years before we were able to actually distribute the podcasts. At first, the podcasts were directed just to IBM's managers, but then they made their way onto IBM's main employee Web page. About a year later, I received a call from Steven Stansel at IBM Press. He and his manager had listened to the podcasts and wanted to know whether I would consider writing a book. I said yes, and Steve put me in touch with Merrikay Lee at MC Press. Merrikay was gracious and courageous enough to take a chance on the content of a manuscript rather than the celebrity or notoriety of the author. The result is the book you are now reading.

Now, let me tell you a bit about the book. When people talk about leadership development, they too often emphasize leadership and silence the development part. In this book I have tried to give equal time to development. Ultimately, leadership is not about accumulated skills, though skills are certainly required, but about human development. Leadership is about understanding ourselves and others. We must be in tune with ourselves to be in tune with others. Remaining in tune with ourselves and others requires ongoing examination of the frames of reference through which we view the world. Reflection is fundamental to this. This book strives to illustrate the importance of reflection in a leader's development.

Like many authors, I hope this book has mass appeal. I would like to think it is for people who aspire to be leaders, leaders who want to be better, and people who simply enjoy good stories. The book is not focused on any narrow field. It is relevant to business managers and executives and people in nonprofit organizations, government, and military service and parents and teachers and all the "ordinary people" who, by choice or happenstance, are in positions in which their ideas and character are likely to influence the thoughts and actions of other "ordinary people."

In addition to the stories themselves, I have attempted to incorporate a number of features to make the book more appealing to you, the reader. First, I have tried to provide quick bursts of leadership insights in a way that all readers can instantly "get it" and apply it. Second, when appropriate, I give the "other side of the story," the uncommon and seemingly illogical acts of leadership that influence human behavior for the better and lift the human spirit (e.g., trusting the untrustworthy, being influenced rather than influencing, not giving constructive feedback). Third, the book asserts that the primary task of leaders, especially senior leaders, is the creation of organizational climates characterized by 360 degrees of trust and deep engagement: organizations that recognize that leaders' development of a well-grounded trust in their people is as, or even more, important than employees' development of trust in their leaders. In service of this principle, the book illuminates the importance of *intrinsic motivation*, explores the concept of *principle-based leadership*, introduces tools such as *The 5 Trust Vital Signs,* and promotes the idea of *collective leadership*.

My hope is that this book accomplishes the above in a simple (not simplistic) way that neither insults your intelligence nor requires you to ponder too long to understand the points—yet will cause you to continue to ponder the lessons long after you put the book down as you gain your own insights and change your behaviors. Finally, the unspoken but pervasive theme is that leaders need to be humble. They must recognize their duty to improve continually; they must acknowledge that their success as leaders is measured by the success

of other people's efforts; and they must understand that helping others to achieve success—to become better than they were—is the reason to lead in the first place.

The book consist of four sections: *The Reflective Leader: Leadership and Other Things I Learned Along the Way*; *Leaders in Search of Leadership*; *Leaders in Their Own Words*; and an *Epilogue*, in which I share my leadership philosophy and encourage you to write your own.

The Reflective Leader: Leadership and Other Things I Learned Along the Way is a series of autobiographical reflections. These chapters constitute a memoir, not a documented history. They are true to the best of my memory. I have generally used real names and will tell you when I have not. If I have not used real names, it is because I do not have permission and I fear that the people might think the text would reflect negatively on them. In a few instances, I use no name at all, though the words are accurate. In any instance where a quote is intended to reflect negatively, I use either a fictitious name or no name at all. First, this book is not about putting anyone down, and second, in all these cases, I do not know these people well enough to determine whether the quote is an aberration or a true indication of who they are as people. I suspect in most cases the former—these are most likely decent people who, at the time, were not living up to their better nature.

Leaders in Search of Leadership is a collage of executive coaching or mentoring experiences. There is a good deal of contrivance in this section. While the points being made have been made with various executives, I have packaged them in an effort to make the discussion more engaging and coherent in the recounting. In some cases, I have combined experiences with several executives into a discussion with a single, often fictitious executive. In another, I took conversations and emails over an extended period of time and put them into a fictitious sequence of scheduled sessions.

Leaders in Their Own Words presents a couple of stories based on actual quotes from executives. My poking a bit of fun at them is my attempt to use humor to make some serious points.

The *Epilogue* concludes the book. In it, I share my leadership philosophy.

I sincerely thank you for purchasing this book and for giving me the gift of your time as you read it. I know each of those decisions required choices about how you spend your money and time—and that there are a lot of things out there competing for both. I hope in the end that you find the book worthwhile and that you are the better for having made those choices. That would be wonderful for both of us.

Thank you and enjoy.

Jack Beach
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