



## THE SPARK, THE FLAME AND THE TORCH

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### OVERVIEW

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We are emerging from a dark era of leadership. According to the Conference Board, between 1987 and 2009, the level of employee job satisfaction plummeted from 61% to 45%, and the number who find their work “interesting” sank from 70% to 51%. Equally disturbing is that the greatest levels of dissatisfaction are among those under the age of twenty-five—our most precious source of tomorrow’s leaders. The leadership style that gave us *The Great Recession* is not the leadership style that can build a resilient and inspiring future.

Alarmed and chastened by these trends, a new kind of leader is rising to the challenge of restoring joy, significance and personal worth in work and life. They have an aura about them, a presence, an ability to inspire others that gets things done and enables them to live meaningful and fulfilled lives. They are guiding us into a brighter time of hope, awakened to the wisdom of creating inspiring organizations. This is a philosophy Lance Secretan calls *Higher Ground Leadership*®.

What makes these leaders special, extraordinary, happy, and delightful to be around? What makes their teams, families, organizations, cities and countries remarkable? They understand that we all yearn to be inspired and to be inspiring. Their daily mantra is, “I will inspire in everything I do today”. We have all the information, tools and skills necessary to live an inspired and inspiring life, and we can use these tools in ways that enable us all to live and lead in this way—and thus change and inspire the world.

Dr. Lance Secretan’s latest book is a masterwork—*The Spark, the Flame and the Torch*—which is an integrated theory of how to inspire at every level, everywhere. He invites readers to become torchbearers for a new era of enlightened leadership. He does this by presenting his exquisitely honed philosophies developed over nearly forty years of running a *Fortune 100* company and coaching, mentoring and advising outstanding leaders in every sector of our society.

### THE SPARK IGNITES THE FLAME, AND THE FLAME LIGHTS THE TORCH.

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**Part ONE: First, the Spark is ignited.** “The Spark”—is the initial energy that kindles the embers of inspiration within each of us; that moves us to live large and to inspire others, to reach our real potential, to make a meaningful difference in our own life, the lives of others and the world. Without the spark, we are ordinary and dull and our aim falls short of our dreams. This dullness is the absence of passion and energy, of dreams and magic in our lives, of relationships that inspire, and of bearings that lead to meaning and fulfillment, excitement and zest. The spark initiates fusion, combustion and reaction.

The spark is awakened by a newly realized, deep, inner awareness of **Why** we are here on Earth, how we will **Be** while we are here, and what we have been called upon to **Do**. Few people have discovered the answers to these questions, or have even cared to explore them. They are content to live the unexamined life—and as Socrates said, “The unexamined life is not worth living”. On the other hand, great leaders are those who have reflected thoughtfully on these questions, and defined the right answers for themselves, and have therefore ignited “the spark” within them. This is the often silenced voice of the soul speaking,



and this we call **Destiny, Character and Calling**—the *Why-Be-Do*—**why** we are here, how we will **be**, and what we will **do**. When one stands in the presence of someone who has a deep, inner knowing of who they are—an awareness of **Why** they are here on Earth, how they will **Be** while they are here, and what they have been called to **Do**—one is standing in the presence of an inspiring person. This is “the spark” that flashes and radiates from within them. Their certainty about their path, and the passion they have for it, makes them the kind of person that others want to be with and to follow, firing up their own hopes for living the same way. This inner awareness creates a fusion with their higher purpose and causes a powerful release of energy. It causes them to be inspiring—they can’t help themselves, because it radiates from within them and stirs the hearts of others.

With this inner knowing and inspiration, we develop a bold, audacious, thrilling, and inspiring ONE Dream® and pour all this into building powerful relationships that inspire.

***Part TWO: The spark ignites the flame.*** “The Flame” is the fire within us that lights the way for others, that generates intensity and raises the temperature; that fires the spiritual and emotional rockets of our lives, that takes us to unexplored places of promise. The flame is bright and visible to all—it represents the values we practice, passionately believe in and model for others. The flame fuels a furnace that informs all our actions, and illuminates the path for others. It is our standard against which we calibrate our conduct. It represents the behaviors we model for others and teach to them, which in turn, encourages them to ignite their own spark and set fire to their flame. The Flame is a set of values we call the CASTLE principles, an acronym for six inspiring ways of being:

*Courage:* Reaching beyond the boundaries of our existing limitations, fears, and beliefs.

*Authenticity:* Being genuine, transparent and aligned with our inner voice in all aspects of life.

*Service:* Willing and actively supporting the good of the other.

*Truthfulness:* Being honest and transparent in all thoughts, words, and actions.

*Love:* Relating to others by touching their hearts in ways that add to who we both are as persons.

*Effectiveness:* Achieving desired outcomes successfully.

As we live by these principles, through our example and our actions, we are the flame by which others are warmed, guided, developed, comforted and inspired. This is how we change the world.

***Part THREE: The flame lights the torch.*** “The Torch” is the legacy we create and the wisdom we pass on, the gift of mentoring, coaching and growing others—how we convert the spark into a flame, using it to light the torch, which we share with others. The flame is used to light the torch and the torch is used to carry fire to others. The torch is “paying it forward”, teaching others, helping them to grow and being an inspiring mentor for them. It is with our torch that we light the way for others. As Carl Jung reminded us, “As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being”.

To live the inspired and inspiring life, we pass through these three progressions: we become inspired: *The Spark*; we live an inspiring life: *The Flame*; and, we share with others, the opportunity to do the same: *The Torch*.