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# Welcome

Whether you believe leadership is the cause or solution to the world's problems, one thing remains true: leadership matters. But not any old leadership will do. In a world where leaders chart unknown waters, face unprecedented challenges, and attempt to embrace the latest technological advancements, what really matters? This question was the starting point of the *Illuminaire* journey.

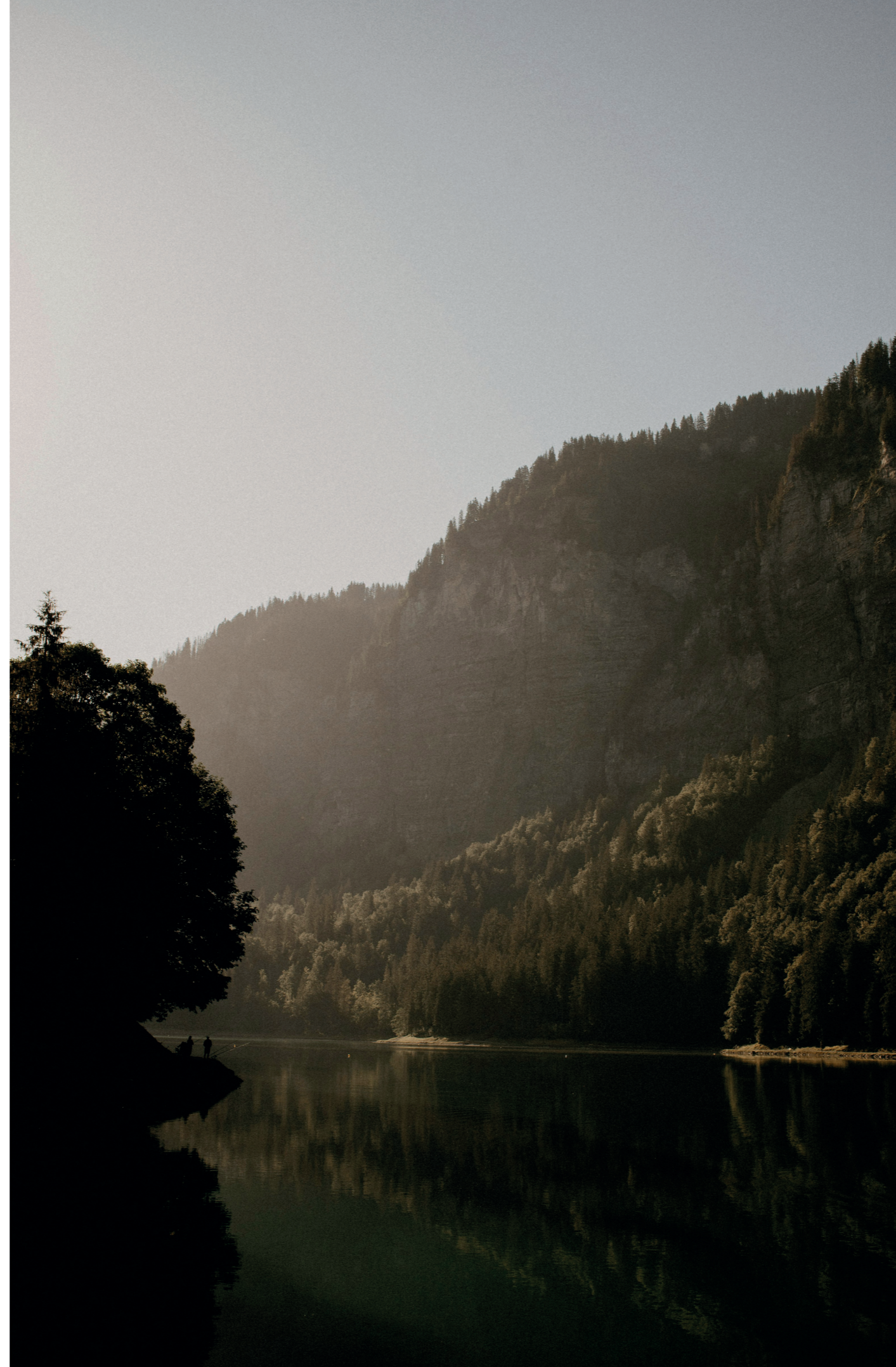


There have never been more resources telling leaders what matters today. Millions of books, articles, blogs, videos, courses, and organisations are available and accessible in an instant. But it is an overwhelming and confusing landscape, making it difficult for leaders to distinguish opinion from fact and the conceptual from reality when it comes to effective leadership practice. Leaders, there is no single source of insight. No quick fix. No blueprint.

I created *Illuminaire Press* to provide a platform that harnesses the collective wisdom from research and practice, bringing the science and strategy of leadership together through *story* and *art*. In my experience, it is the triangulation that comes from knowing the research data, applying the wisdom from tried and tested leaders, and listening to personal stories that provides a sound foundation for the leadership journey of becoming. And art? Well, because art is not only a source of beauty; it can inspire and speak without words.

## I believe strong and healthy leadership should matter today.

First, the work of leadership — regardless of context or industry, paid or not — is physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. The work requires a strength of character, an ability to make tough decisions, and a determination to remain true to core values against the tide of popularism. Second, leading is a perpetual process



of becoming: A process marked by varying seasons of growth, joy, challenge, and loss. The process can yield negative or positive results depending on how the leader takes responsibility for sustaining the journey of becoming and the healthy practices adopted along the way.

Third, at the intersection of these two words is the small but mighty *and*. In the face of unhelpful, extreme stereotypes of leaders, many have come to associate strong leadership with inflexible, controlling, and dispassionate behaviours. And yet, we know because of the uncertainty and complexity of the world's challenges, it is not a time for weak, soft, and indecisive leadership. The word *and* provides the balance. It points to strong leaders defined not by their superhero powers, but by the fruit in their life and those around them.

To explore what matters when it comes to practicing strong and healthy leadership, Volume One will first unpack some of the misconceptions of strong leadership, focusing on ego-centered, toxic behaviours and subsequently reorientating the discussion around how leaders can harness the power of influence with integrity. The second theme explores what it really means to develop healthy leadership practices that go beyond diet and exercise to consider a more integrated approach that spans physical, emotional, and mental dimensions. Today's ferocious nature of change is a challenge for all leaders, hence the third theme spotlights leading in transition: the critical but often underappreciated internal dimension of change. The final theme of creative leadership underpins the need for fresh perspectives and innovative solutions, seeking to help leaders make room for the inevitability of the new.

There is no doubt as I have researched, listened, and reflected on this writing journey, I have learned, relearned, and been challenged to unlearn what really matters when it comes to strong and healthy leadership. It is my hope you experience the same. \*

Karise