"Brilliantly captures the key question for business leaders today. What kind of leader will you choose to be to address the pressing and unique problems we face?"

Justin King CBE, Former CEO Sainsbury's

PUTTING THE Heart BACK INTO BUSINESS

How to place people, planet and purpose at the core of what you do

ANDREW THORNTON
& EUDORA PASCALL

Andrew Thornton is an entrepreneur, speaker, author, advisor and coach to business leaders who see that businesses can be a force for good in society.

Along with his partner Eudora, he developed the heart way of doing business in his award-winning London supermarket, Thornton's Budgens. Together they founded Heart in Business, whose purpose is 'to uncover the Authentic Leader in us all, trusting that profit will follow'. He lives, writes, speaks and coaches the principles of Heart in Business on a daily basis.

He considers himself to be a 'visionary heart surgeon', having demonstrated that helping business leaders to open their hearts is the best way to build a sustainable and profitable business.

He was the co-founder of social enterprises The People's Supermarket and Food from the Sky, and founder of the consultancy SRCG. Prior to that, he worked at Ogilvy & Mather and Mars.

Holding a master's degree in Marketing from University College Dublin, Andrew splits his time between London and the Allgäu region of South Germany. He has two sons and a daughter. He loves to ski, run, swim, and cook and eat great food!

Eudora Pascall is a coach and facilitator to business leaders and an author writing on a more heartful approach to business. She has spent the last 20 years developing and growing the Heart in Business tools, techniques and methodology, influenced by

teachings, study and experience across the world. Her purpose is that 'I unknot knots to bring direction, flow and purpose to your life by uncovering your gold together.' She passionately cares about helping people be the best of themselves.

Having studied at university in Britain, Germany and France, Eudora has several degrees, including a master's in organisational and individual change, cultural behaviour and economics. She is qualified professionally in transactional analysis as well as other individual psychological growth programmes, including COR in the UK and the US. Eudora has a unique, global background in the private, public and NGO sectors in Britain, Germany and France.

Eudora lives between Germany and London with her partner and daughter. She enjoys swimming, knitting and discovering more about different cultures.

Andrew's heart-centred ethos has practical application for large and small enterprises. This book demonstrates how being heart centred can deliver benefits for colleagues, customers and the planet.
– Charles Wilson, former CEO, Booker

Andrew's journey to a heart-centred business approach has lessons for all business leaders looking to create long-term value for all stakeholders – the 'why' question cannot just be profit anymore.
– Roger Whiteside, CEO, Greggs

The heart approach put forward in this book gives you a framework for developing your culture and fully engaging your people around your purpose. A framework that has a proven track record of success at Thornton's Budgens - bringing purpose to a business in a way that is so hard to achieve.
– Vittoria Varalli, VP National Wholesale, Sobeys

Putting the Heart Back into Business *is a must read for any conscious leader who believes that people are the key to a thriving business. It gives you proven tools to engage with all of your stakeholders so you can develop a more collaborative culture – as a B Corp, that's music to my ears.*
– Jayn Sterland, Managing Director, Weleda UK

This is a must-read book for anyone who believes business can be a force for good in society and still make a decent profit. So many of the broken aspects of the current business model are addressed by the heart approach put forward in this book; the full engagement of people is the only way forward!
– Professor Damien McLoughlin, Smurfit Business School,
University College Dublin

Heart is what has been lacking in business over the past centuries with the consequential global social and environmental catastrophes in the news every day. Andrew and Eudora show that putting the heart and compassion back into business does not compromise business success. Rather, they clearly show in this excellent book, a written distillation of their life's work, that putting love and heart into business results in stronger and more profitable companies – our business is one of the proofs of the pudding.
– Paul Hargreaves, CEO, Cotswold Fayre and Flourish

Putting the Heart Back into Business *is a practical guide on how businesses with purpose and a desire to allow their employees to thrive can conquer the world. Based on sharp-end front-line retail experience, Andrew and Eudora show how the heart way of doing things can transform a business and all those who work within it.*
– Steve Murrells, CEO, The Co-op

We are experiencing a collective awakening that business urgently needs to find its purpose. Profit maximising has failed us – leaving behind a devastated environment and grotesque inequality. Andrew Thornton had this realisation years ago, and he's been responding to it in his own grocery business ever since. This positions him perfectly to share his lessons from the front line in this fascinating and timely book. Andrew's focus is on heart, which makes perfect sense in a world whose heart is unwell. We all desperately need business to change, so that it renews rather than depletes people and planet. This transformation starts with ourselves, and in this book Andrew and Eudora guide us through that process. I recommend it highly for anyone interested in how to embrace purpose in their business.
– James Perry, Co-Chairman, COOK; board member, B.Lab Global

In telling his own story of the journey from a head- to heart-centred business, Andrew brilliantly captures in a straightforward and practical way what I believe to be the key question for business leaders today. What kind of leader will you choose to be to address the pressing and unique problems that we face in the 21st century?
– Justin King CBE, former CEO, Sainsbury's

Growing a business for the long term, through good times and tough times, to the benefit of all stakeholders means nurturing the soul and working on its health. Andrew and Eudora have used their experience to set out some great insights and tools to help those responsible for taking their business on this journey. I'll certainly be encouraging my kids to read this as they develop their careers.
– Chris Martin, former CEO, Musgrave; NED, Wilko and ABP Food Group

I've been fortunate to know Andrew for 20 years and have long admired his spirit, passion and need for more. After reading his book I now know him a lot better and recognise where his 'need for more' came from. His book is a testimony to the power of belief: belief in people, belief that we can do better, and a belief that each of us has a role to play. It is typical of Andrew that rather than keep this 'secret' to himself, his instinct is to share, to get the word out. Passionate, heartfelt, honest – this is a book for our confusing times.
– Andrew Phipps, EMEA Head of Business Development and Global Futurist, Cushman & Wakefield

When the pressure comes to achieve performance targets and financial aims, there is a tendency for business leaders to revert to type, especially if colleagues seek to avoid the stark reality, and this can lead to unconstructive and disruptive behaviour. In this book Andrew and Eudora offer practical tools in order to identify and choose a more collaborative and productive way of being, enabling all stakeholders to face the harsh reality of their situation but at the same time work well together to resolve the challenges they face.
– Paul Monk, Executive Chairman, Compleat Food Group

As the world changes so radically around us, it is vital to understand the role you want to play and how that complements the people and organisations you work with. Putting the Heart Back into Business *provides the framework and multiple tools for every leader to navigate through the endless challenges of life. The book connects us with our inner core and guides us towards our own unique life, a life led with heart, and a business led with real purpose. By doing this work, we can make sense of the many challenges we experience in life and find ways to overcome the obstacles. But most of all, we can find a way to live the life we need and want every day, a life that is not just connected to ourselves but connected with everyone and everything around us – the way life is meant to be lived. I hope you will find this book as meaningful and liberating as I did.*
– JP Donnelly, Country Manager, WPP

In this highly readable, compassionate and timely book, Andrew and Eudora succinctly capture the benefits that accrue to businesses by moving beyond the pure-profit motive to something more worthwhile. Laying out a series of logical and clearly explained templates for action, the book demonstrates how implementing such a transformation, whilst hard, is not impossible if you cleave to a meaningful and fulfilling purpose – no 'faking it to make it' – which then consistently informs attitudes and behaviours, allied to the concept of 'self-leadership'. In taking us through the remarkable journey they spearheaded at Thornton's Budgens, interspersed with fascinating interviews with employees and other business leaders who have embraced similar approaches, they not only deliver important guidance for business but also wise help on how to lead a better more, fulfilling life. Everybody will get something from this book.
– Damian Thornton, Chairman, Stamford Partners

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To Hanne, James and Rory.

Foreword

Rita Clifton CBE

I heard about Andrew Thornton, the co-author of this book (with Eudora Pascall), well before I actually met him. I was doing some work with The Musgrave Group (which owned the Budgens brand from 2002 to 2015), and I kept on hearing about this extraordinary man who owned the most interesting and progressive stores within the Budgens franchise. From what I could glean, he was actually already doing so much of what many other grocery retailers were aspiring to do: real engagement with the local community, an imaginative and sincere approach to sustainability (with the 'Food from the Sky' initiative and others), and a very enlightened approach to developing his teams and employees. Having worked in sustainability and culture change for many years myself, I was very keen to meet him.

And so I did, and our conversations over the years have extended and deepened. I am thrilled that Andrew has written this book with Eudora, and opened his heart, business practices and personal as well as professional learnings over time. He is an example of the very human type of business leader that we – and business more generally – need as a positive exemplar of what good business can really do. For each other, for communities and for society more broadly.

I was also delighted to meet Andrew's co-author Eudora Pascall, and I know she has been instrumental in bringing to life the 'heart'

vision at Thornton's Budgens through her coaching approach. Her approach to unknotting what stops people living a fulfilling life has been key to delivering change in the examples shared in the book. And Eudora's perspective beautifully complements Andrew's innovation. It's certainly a book about business with a real difference.

I know I am not alone in worrying that business as a whole can struggle with its perception as a positive force. It's slightly depressing that politicians often feel they get more votes from giving business a good kicking than supporting it. And yet, as we know, if we don't have good businesses delivering the products and services we need and paying appropriate taxes, we won't have the money or resources for schools, hospitals and civil society. Business needs public and political support to ensure effective freedom to operate.

It doesn't help that businesses and business leaders have often presented as an 'alien nation' – speaking in jargon, sometimes wearing stiff corporate uniforms and paying themselves in a way that can be truly out of this world. Not exactly helpful for building empathy and support for market economies, and not likely to build the kind of understanding and long-term relationships on which sustainably successful businesses depend. This is all magnified by a digital world where every action and word inside a business is now visible, and every misdeed is amplified with a scale and speed that can take your breath away. Whatever happens on the inside will get to the outside… so we all need to ensure that internal organisational reality is as good as we would like to say it is.

It's crucial that businesses act, and are seen to act, in a human way, for all their stakeholders, and that means business leaders need to behave and lead businesses in an authentically human way – as human beings who care about people, their families, communities and the planet. This is not incompatible with financially successful businesses – increasingly it is unacceptably high risk not to act well, as well as a wasted opportunity for

sustainable growth. Numerous studies now highlight how (truly) purpose-led businesses outperform markets.

All this is why this excellent book by Andrew and Eudora is so important and helpful. Andrew brings his business head, human heart and deep practical experience to encourage and enable people to bring their best human selves to work and to lead. He and Eudora also bring so many vivid examples, practical tools and uplifting personal development thinking to help the reader. As a fellow personal development enthusiast myself, I know how valuable and transformational some of this work can be for individuals and organisations more broadly. It's also been gratifying to see that more and more business leaders have been prepared to share their personal stories and even vulnerabilities to help others with issues like mental health and resilience. Perhaps the most affecting elements of the book, however, are the personal stories and interviews with many of Andrew's very diverse employees; many have clearly had their working and personal lives transformed by his leadership, humanity and imaginative programmes.

To develop the kind of world we need, we need good businesses. Good businesses now and in the future need to have much more human leaders, acting in a way that reflects that humanity. We all need to ask ourselves what we can do to create the world we want. 'Heart in Business' is a fabulous contribution to how we can all ensure that happens.

Rita Clifton CBE has been called a 'brand guru' by the *Financial Times* and 'the doyenne of branding' by *Campaign* magazine. Alongside her board-chairing and non-executive roles, she is an author, columnist, keynote speaker, conference chair and practitioner on all aspects of brands, branding and business leadership.

Rita passionately believes in making

the world a better place and the role business has in this: 'I want to make business more human on every level – caring about the planet, about people, about helping society move forward. A big part of making businesses more human is making sure we have more diverse leadership and a much better gender balance running organisations. I love helping leaders realise their people will be happier, their customers will feel warmer towards them, and they'll create a lower-risk, higher-return business if they take a longer-term view.'

Rita's career has included being Vice Chair at Saatchi & Saatchi, London CEO and Chair of Interbrand and co-founder of BrandCap. She is now a portfolio chair and non-executive director on the board of businesses including John Lewis Partnership, Nationwide Building Society and Ascential plc. Her non-profit boards have included WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature), the UK Sustainable Development Commission and Green Alliance. She was recently appointed Chair at Forum for the Future.

Introduction

Eight years ago, I realised I'd been seeking an alternative way of running a business – one that's heart centred rather than head centred; and one that's purpose centred rather than profit centred. As a result, I decided to write this book.

I had two false starts, but I believe it's no coincidence that it has been published now – at a time when society and businesses face the most challenging period many of us have lived through. As I write, we are emerging from the Covid pandemic, and we're facing an escalating climate crisis. There isn't a single business on the planet that can afford to avoid it – especially after the August 2021 report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which announced a 'code red for humanity'.

The climate crisis cannot be addressed without a lead from governments across the globe, but businesses have a crucial role to play too. There are two approaches business leaders can take. We can either wait and see what the government mandates us to do, or be on the front foot and act now, giving our businesses a big competitive advantage. And while this book is not about the climate crisis, I believe that if businesses embraced the heart-centred approach, it would transform how we deal with this huge challenge and dramatically speed up progress.

In parallel with this, there remains unprecedented inequality in the world and discrimination on the basis of wealth, sex, ethnic

origin and sexual orientation. As I explore in Chapter 4, being the owner of a supermarket that employs people from many different races and cultures gave me a unique insight into the contribution all humans can make to a thriving business. It also highlighted the opportunities missed by business leaders who fail to recognise the potential in such diversity.

This book addresses a fundamental question – what is the role of business? Is it purely about making as much money as possible, or does business have a broader role to play in society? I believe it's the historic predominance of the former that has resulted in the climate and inequality crises. Over the past few decades, many businesses have become obsessed with profits, with that focus becoming ever more short term. A poor quarter's earnings can send a share price spiralling downwards, regardless of the long-term prospects of the business. And while I'm heartened that the importance of purpose in business is growing, I'm also concerned that it faces an uphill battle. As I write in October 2021, for example, Morrisons (the UK's fourth-largest grocer) has agreed a private equity sale, the nature of which encourages asset-stripping and profiteering.

This book puts forward an alternative perspective, one in which purpose sits at the centre of a business. That purpose can then become a force for good in the world. I believe that a heart-based alternative to the profit-focused approach can engage with all stakeholders in a way that leads to win–win situations where all of those stakeholders – and not just the shareholders – have a place at the table.

So, what's wrong with being a profit-centred business?

Most businesses will not end up in such extreme circumstances as Tesco did in the mid-2010s (more about that in Chapter 5), but being purely profit driven has an impact at numerous levels:

- **Leaders:** As a business leader, do you think that profit maximisation alone will help you live a fulfilling life? There's only so much money you can spend in your lifetime, so surely there must be more to aim for than this?
- **Employees:** Chasing profits provides even less satisfaction to employees than it does to its leaders. Many employees want to make a difference in the world, and a business with a meaningful purpose makes that possible. Millennial and Gen Z employees are far more discerning about who they work for than previous generations, posing a long-term existential threat to profit-centred businesses.
- **Customers:** There's no doubt that the 'profit at all costs' approach leads to environmental degradation, and the reward mechanism of this approach further increases inequality. Consumers are becoming more and more aware of this, and more discerning about how they spend their cash.
- **Environment:** Most businesses have now woken up to the climate crisis and started to recognise it's their responsibility to help deal with it. However, until environmental resources are properly priced through legislation, a focus on short-term profits will always lead to exploitation of those resources.
- **Engagement:** A 142-country study of 180 million employees by Gallup (see Resources) in 2013 found that only 13 per cent of people were engaged at work. That's a shocking statistic. They found that 24 per cent – almost a quarter of all respondents – were actively disengaged. That's not a good result for the business community. I know from experience that the heart-based approach engages way more than 13 per cent of employees.

And while I believe that heart-centred businesses are key to resolving the climate and inequality crises, I don't for one second believe that profit is a dirty word. Businesses need to generate a profit to survive, but when is enough, enough? My view is that businesses can make a decent profit *and* have a positive impact. Does the heart-based approach to business maximise profits? In the short term, probably not. In the long term, maybe – but does this matter? Is it the priority? Surely a decent return and a great contribution to society are what we should be aiming for?

Heart-centred businesses are fun to work for

My hypothesis is that open-hearted businesses are much more fun to work for, have a much longer sustainable future ahead of them, and are much more humane in their interactions with stakeholders. As I see it, this makes good business sense – take care of those who matter, and they will take care of you. And while more and more companies are embracing the need for purpose and the idea of responsible business, I also know that this approach will not land comfortably with everyone. However, if you've gone to the trouble of buying a book about putting the heart back into business, you've passed through the first gate.

If you're a business leader who is touched by the heart-centred way of being, you can start to change your business right away. There's no time like the present to begin to open your heart, and this book provides plenty of tools to help you do this. If you aren't sufficiently senior in your organisation or feel your perspective won't be heard, I can assure you there are plenty of open-hearted, purposeful businesses out there where you'd probably be a lot happier.

The idea is not a new one. That's why the title of this book refers to putting the heart *back* into business. Many of the original Quaker businesses had a heart – after all, it was Joseph Rowntree

who invented the idea of the pension and the staff canteen. He considered that well-housed and well-fed workers were worth investing in – and saw that this was good business.

Why me?

I believe I'm well qualified to write this book because I've made this journey myself. My early working life was very much that of a profit-focused entrepreneur, but now I'm more than 10 years into my journey towards being an open-hearted leader. I say on a journey, as I think it's my life's work – and I doubt many people can say their heart is fully open all of the time. While this is largely my story and what I've learnt about opening my heart in a personal and business context, I've also interviewed a number of business leaders whom I respect, and their voices will be heard throughout the book. It feels as if everything I've done in my life so far has been preparing me for this time and for sharing the heart-centred approach.

Why us?

For most of the past eight years, I've been working on this book on my own. However, early in 2021, my partner Eudora challenged me on the fact that I'm yet another white, middle-class, privileged male author. Ouch! And a fair point, so I asked Eudora to collaborate with me. She is the co-founder of Heart in Business and we have worked together developing most of the content you will read here. She has also interviewed key team members at Thornton's Budgens, which will appear throughout the book. I believe that if you take the energy of these interviews and multiply it times the 60-odd people who work at Thornton's Budgens, it equals the impact of a business with a heart.

We have deliberately not referenced academic studies to back up our theories, but we will share how various tools and techniques have worked for us and other business leaders we know. We've

linked together disparate bodies of work into one central approach that we call Authentic Leadership. And while I will put forward financial information from my own business and other case studies, I'm not going to present a fully researched financial case for open-hearted business, as this has been done well elsewhere (one great example is *The Heart of Business*, by Hubert Joly). And to be absolutely clear, when I use 'I' in this book, I'm referring to my personal experiences; when I use 'we', it refers to the heart-based work that Eudora and I have developed together.

Reasons to be optimistic

The signs are already everywhere, but I'll focus on the area I know best – the retail sector. Under its Project Earth plan, in summer 2020, London department store Selfridges launched a number of initiatives, including selling second-hand clothes, opening a repair service and renting furniture. I understand from a colleague who has helped them with customer research that this plan has been carefully developed. They have been tracking their customers for a number of years and now feel they're ready for these changes. Meanwhile, the Central England Co-op (which operates around 450 stores) is putting bike repair stations and toilets in all its stores (even the smaller ones). As its inspiring CEO Debbie Robinson told me: 'One of the things that stops people cycling to towns and villages to shop in different places is the lack of toilets.' A far-sighted retailer if ever there was one. Whatever happens next, I believe a heart-centred approach has to be a better way to do business. And maybe, just maybe, we can get off the hamster wheel and slow down a bit. Less commuting, more time with family and more time to reflect on what's important in life will all help us move forward in a more sustainable way.

How to approach this book

I believe you'll instinctively know when to tackle different aspects of this book. If you feel drawn to a particular section, then that's your starting point. We'll be sharing a number of exercises throughout the book, so I'd suggest buying a journal or notebook specifically for this purpose. Look out for the words 'YOUR TURN' and pause to complete the exercise that follows.

Have you ever attended a workshop where you planned to make changes but promptly forgot about them? One way to avoid this happening is to find yourself an accountability buddy. This could be a work colleague, your partner or a friend. You could work through the book together, or ask someone to hold you accountable for a specific change you want to make. At all times, trust your intuition.

I've spent most of my life working in the food business, so it's hardly surprising that many of the examples in this book come from that sector. However, I believe that the principles apply universally regardless of the sector, and are just as applicable to anywhere a group of people get together to achieve something. Eudora and I have also applied our principles to other areas including the charity, advertising, entertainment and IT sectors.

Beginnings

In order for you to understand how and why we evolved the heart-based approach, it's important for us to share our stories so far. I was born in Stockton-on-Tees, in the north of England, but when I was four weeks old my family returned to Ireland. So, even though I was born in the UK and have spent more than 35 years living there, I spent my formative years in Ireland and consider myself to be Irish. Because of my father's job, we moved around a lot – from England to Carlow (a few hours south of Dublin), and to Dublin. We then spent two years in Amsterdam before returning to Dublin. I'm deeply grateful to my parents for these moves, especially the two years we spent in Holland, which helped me develop an international view. As a student, I worked in the US; my first job took me to Wales and then England; my working life has always involved travel to and work in many different countries and now I split my time between London and Germany. I truly feel like a citizen of the world.

As my siblings will attest, I showed early promise as an entrepreneur. Some of my early schemes included selling Christmas trees and collecting old newspapers to sell for recycling. At the age

of 12, I started my first paid job in Keogh's, our local newsagent. It was an early version of what would now be called a convenience store. Thanks to its owner, Declan O'Dowd, I caught the retail bug that remains with me to this day. Keogh's was literally underneath the head office of Superquinn, the iconic Irish food retailer founded by the late Feargal Quinn. Feargal remains a global food industry legend, and Declan was one of his up-and-coming managers who branched out on his own. I ended up working for Declan until my final year at university, in the latter days running the store for him at weekends and while he was on holiday.

When I graduated with a master's degree in marketing from University College Dublin, I was well prepared for my interviews and 48-hour selection panel with the confectionery company Mars – because I already knew a thing or two about selling sweets! They sent me to the UK for two years' training. Mars, based in Slough, just outside London, was an amazing place to work in the mid-Eighties. My peers went on to lead retailers such as Asda, Sainsbury's, Argos, Boots, the Post Office, Welcome Break, Loblaws and the Co-op, to name but a few. It really was a values-led business. Mars has five core principles – freedom, mutuality, efficiency, quality and responsibility – and we lived by them every day. The idea that a company could have its values written up in a glossy report and subsequently ignore them in its day-to-day operations was something I only discovered later in my working life. I also recognised the importance of bosses leading by example. Under the mutuality principle, there was a true sense of togetherness. Everyone at Mars clocked in – if the factory guys had to, then so did everyone else. The co-CEOs at that time were John and Forrest Mars, and they clocked in with the rest of us.

Just over three years later, I was headhunted by the advertising company Ogilvy & Mather and offered the chance to set up a new company within O&M's Research International division, replicating a consultancy business they had in the US. While I was loving every minute of working at Mars, the chance to create and run a business

was too tempting. One year on, we hadn't made O&M a fortune and they'd been taken over by comms giant WPP. We were offered a management giveaway, which means we were paid off and given the company we'd started. It was a signal to go with the flow. Thus began my 16 years as CEO of the consultancy SRCG. We had many iterations over that time, with the latter five to six years focused back where I started, on strategic development in the convenience store and small-format retail sector. At our peak, we employed around 35 people and developed an excellent international reputation in our niche area. I loved the excitement of working in the US, many European countries, the Middle East and Asia, for such retailers and suppliers as Marks & Spencer, BP, Circle K, Spar, Musgrave, PepsiCo and Unilever.

Is that all there is?

In 2005 I found myself in the middle of a midlife crisis. I was married with two sons, then aged eight and ten; the founder and CEO of a successful consulting company; lived in central London; and had a lovely cottage by the sea. I recall sitting in my garden one sunny afternoon wondering, 'Is this it? Is this as good as it gets?'

A pivotal moment took place a while later over breakfast with my dear friend David in the Bailey Hotel in London. As we were about to say goodbye, he said: 'You are bored with your job – you need to do something different.' I kept playing those words over and over in my head, concluding that he was right – I did need a new challenge. I wasn't fulfilled or particularly enjoying myself. One of my biggest frustrations was about the meaningfulness (to me) of our consultancy work. That led to months of internal wrangling and discussions with my wife. Running the consultancy was more than a full-time job, so how could I create the space to figure out what to do next? Another breakthrough came over coffee a few months later.

I'd previously been part of a CEO mentoring organisation

called Vistage and stayed in touch with Coilin Heavey, who led our group, after I left. She helped me to see that, thanks to the success of the consultancy, I had enough equity in the properties I owned to remortgage and generate sufficient funds to live for two years without an income. My wife was very supportive and gave me the confidence to start the process of selling my share in the consultancy to my partners.

So, while other men going through a midlife crisis might buy a Porsche, I bought two supermarkets! My decision to quit SRCG and become a supermarket owner was driven by a desire to do something different. Looking back, I realise it was to create a revolutionary business model – one that was not all about short-term profits and that had some sort of meaningful purpose at its heart.

As we entered 2020, the pace of life seemed to be at breaking point. I did a lot of public speaking around the world, and often used the image of a hamster running faster and faster in its wheel to wonder whether there was a different way. No matter where I was in the world, when I asked 'Who is continuously exhausted and worn out?', I always saw plenty of raised hands. Then, as I was finishing this book, a university classmate died at the age of 58. He was the CEO of one of the Irish banks caught up in the 2008 financial crisis. The stress must surely have contributed to his untimely death. I certainly didn't have a grand plan at this stage, just a sense that I needed to move in a different direction. I resonate with what Steve Jobs once said – while at the time his moves were not always obvious, afterwards it was easy to look back and join the dots.

The early days of Thornton's Budgens

Looking back at my first few years of being a supermarket owner, it was all about community and the environment. While I was an industry consultant at SRCG, I regularly spoke at conferences about how easy it was to compete against the likes of Tesco (who

had started to encroach on the convenience sector) by being a community retailer and doing things that a centrally managed, command-and-control business could not. Around that time, Musgrave (an Irish client of ours at SRCG) bought the long-established Budgens brand and were in the process of converting it into a franchise along the lines of SuperValu and Centra in Ireland. After an initial conversation with Martin Hyson (the Budgens director responsible for divestment) and months of discussions, Budgens agreed to sell me their store in the north London suburb of Crouch End.

I borrowed a stack of money and, in early October 2006, Thornton's Budgens was up and running. What followed was a baptism of fire. While I had experience of developing retail strategy, I had zero experience of running a store of this size. It turned over about £175,000 a week, employed around 80 people, and was way bigger and more complicated than Keogh's. It was run by a manager who did a good job under the command-and-control culture of a corporate Budgens, but struggled with my hands-off style.

It was a tough first year, but I slowly started to get a grip on the operational side. Less than six months after buying Crouch End, Martin Hyson agreed to let me buy a second store in nearby Belsize Park. There were certainly some hairy moments in the early days. Debora, one of the Crouch End managers, described me as an 'ideas factory'. And while being creative can be advantageous, when combined with a lack of a clear and well-defined purpose, it can lead to chaos. I was all over the place and my team, who were trained to do as the boss says, followed.

Despite all of that, in year two we won Independent Retailer of the Year at the prestigious Retail Industry Awards and started to win environmental awards. Surely we were on track? Despite my exhaustion, we did have some breakthrough ideas.

Here are the three I'm proudest of:

1. **Pennies for Plastic**
   In 2002, Ireland was one of the first countries to introduce a plastic bag charge, which reduced consumption by more than 90 per cent. It seemed an obvious idea, but the UK was slow to act. However, in 2007, we became the first UK supermarket to stop giving away free carrier bags. Together with Clare Richmond, a creative marketer and Crouch End local, we created Pennies for Plastic. The idea was simple – for every unused plastic bag, we gave the cost (1p) to a charitable fund. Over four years, across both stores, we collected and gave away £125,000 to more than 40 different local good causes (saving 1.25m carrier bags). For me this was a win–win scheme. I tried to recruit some of the major supermarkets to do the same, but failed this time round.

2. **Food from the Sky**
   I was fortunate enough to get to know the eco-chef Arthur Potts-Dawson and was impressed by the small herb and vegetable garden on the roof of his Acorn House restaurant in King's Cross. After that I met Azul Thome, who approached me about a local food-growing project. When I took her up to our empty 3,000 sq ft flat roof, her eyes lit up. Together we came up with the idea of turning it into a farm, which was run as a separate social enterprise. Locals who wanted to improve their connection with food helped us to run the garden, and we sold the output downstairs in the store – ploughing all the income back into the farm. It was beautiful and great fun.

3. **Chiller doors**
   A study allegedly carried out by Coca-Cola (I say allegedly as it was often discussed in the supermarket industry, but I never saw a copy – perhaps it was an urban myth) showed that doors on soft drinks chillers were a barrier

> to sales, and that sales were higher from chillers with no doors. This idea was taken on by supermarkets globally, so that by the early 21st century, most supermarkets used open chillers for most products. These chillers cost way more to run and burnt almost twice as much carbon, so we set out to prove that this received wisdom was a myth. By retrofitting doors on all our meat and dairy chillers, we proved that sales were not lost and chiller running costs could be cut by 46 per cent in the process. And while the CEO of one of the major UK chains said that their customers didn't like the idea, mine got it immediately and were very supportive. I subsequently discovered that the major chain had researched the idea in focus groups and encountered resistance. It seemed like a hassle, so why support it? When we did it, people understood the benefits and realised it wasn't a hassle to open the doors. Slowly but surely, 12 years on, more and more retailers are following our lead.

I should also mention the initiatives that didn't work – such as inviting a local nutritionist to speak to customers in our Crouch End store on a Saturday morning, or our zero-packaging section in Belsize Park. They were ideas ahead of their time. Another idea we experimented with was a series of recordings created by another Crouch End local to help people be more mindful and reflect on their emotions. It could've worked, but before it had any chance to bed in, I was on to the next idea and our focus drifted away.

Heartbreak... and then a slow death

During the second year of Thornton's Budgens, something else began to gnaw away at me – that it wasn't just my job that had become unfulfilling. My wife and I seemed to have drifted apart. We lacked common goals or even a direction. I knew deep inside my heart (even if I couldn't fully articulate it at the time) that I was

being called to move in a different direction, and it wasn't one that had any appeal to my wife. Telling my sons that their parents were going to separate was the most difficult thing I've ever had to do. And while I generally don't have regrets, this is one conversation that I'd like to have a second go at.

Then, in 2008, an inevitable event happened in UK retail – Woolworths went bust. For me it was a life-changing moment, as there was a decent-sized Woolworths five doors up from my Crouch End store. There was already Thornton's Budgens, the Tesco Express next door, an M&S Simply Food, along with numerous independent convenience stores, fruit and veg shops, a butcher and an organic and health food store. In other words, plenty of food retail space. The moment I heard about Woolworths' demise, I knew another food retailer would be arriving on our doorstep. Despite getting out my old consultant's black book and contacting CEOs of various non-food retailers such as Argos and Poundland to try to engage their interest, my worst nightmare came true, and Waitrose took the site in the autumn of 2009. If I'd had a list of retailers I did *not* want to take the site, in order of priority it would have been Waitrose, Waitrose and Waitrose!

As a result, we experienced three years of slow death. After a healthy start (we only lost 18 per cent of our turnover in week one, versus a predicted 25–30 per cent), each week that passed saw Waitrose chipping away at our turnover. Our customers loved what we stood for, yet too many were tempted by the allure of Waitrose, even if just for the occasional basket. We lost money every week and, despite support from Musgrave, by the end of 2012 I was exhausted. I was putting everything I had into keeping the ship afloat and, despite the fact that Belsize Park was doing really well, everything we made there was lost in Crouch End. It was soul destroying.

Just before Christmas 2012, I had another defining meal with a friend. He asked me what I most wanted for 2013. My answer was twofold – to sort out Thornton's Budgens by finding a viable way forward and, having done that, to take a three-month sabbatical to

refresh and regroup. And that's what I did. Thanks to the support of Budgens' regional director Gavin Claxton, who was my partner in what I described at the time as a conscious negotiation, we agreed a deal for Budgens to acquire the Crouch End store. I say a conscious negotiation because I broke all the rules about keeping my cards close to my chest. I shared exactly what I wanted. Gavin felt my needs were fair and reasonable and together we went about securing them. My lesson here was that there's no need to play a game; you can get what you want by putting your cards on the table.

Discovering my purpose

On 6 June 2013, I was on a plane to India for the first part of my three-month sabbatical. The day before that, I'd had yet another fateful meal – lunch with my friend Nicolas. He casually asked whether I intended to write a book about my 'somewhat unusual approach to running a business'. Having never thought about this before, the words 'Yes, it would be called *Putting the Heart Back into Business*' came out of my mouth. I hadn't even connected this book sitting inside me with the creative writing course I'd planned as the final part of my sabbatical.

So much happened in India, and the idea of the heart kept returning to me. I started to explore the idea of individuals having a purpose – the Indians call it *swadharma* (*swa* means own, and *dharma*, duty). It's their own 'unique role in life or way of being in the world, which it is their duty to realise and fulfil'. I realised that mine was all about putting the heart back into business, and that for Thornton's Budgens the missing (and most important) dimension was our people, followed by community and the environment. I also realised that the key to unlocking people was to open their hearts. I stretched myself by signing up for a three-day creative painting workshop at the Osho Ashram in Pune. Our teacher said: 'Just start painting, don't think or plan – just paint.'

I did, and a huge heart emerged that filled the wall-sized canvas. When I returned to Belsize Park, I realised it fitted exactly on one wall of the windowless space I used as an office/meeting room. It was meant to be there.

Another significant moment on my journey was meeting Azul, my co-founder at Food from the Sky, about a year after my marriage ended. We ended up being more than business partners; I moved to Crouch End, and we lived together on and off for five years. I didn't have a clue what this heart idea might look like or how it could be applied, so I spent a year reading, writing about and meeting CEOs to explore the idea of heart in business. As a result, I ran the first heart workshops with Azul at Thornton's Budgens in late 2013. By early 2015, I was ready to form an organisation and gathered together a small group I'd met on my personal development journey – all of whom I felt understood business, having worked in organisations themselves. Azul and I had parted by then, and that initial group included Eudora.

Over the past 11 years, I've explored numerous different approaches and they formed the basis for Heart in Business – where personal development meets business development. Our purpose is 'to uncover the Authentic Leader in us all, trusting that profit will follow' and our mission is 'to equip leaders to discover the purpose in everyone, to inspire the company to honour its reason for being, so that everyone can be in flow through unknotting and live at their full potential'.

We support businesses through this journey to the heart through a mix of coaching, training, facilitation and advisory support. We call what we do Accelerated Transformation Coaching (ATC) – it is our unique approach to uncovering the Authentic Leader in you and getting to the nub of what your purpose in life is. We focus on unknotting what is stopping you living a totally fulfilling life, as we believe that we are all leaders in different aspects of our lives, and that this unknotting process helps you access that leadership – it is a form of alchemy.

ATC is the thread that runs through all our work with business leaders and their teams. This proven method gets results that are rapid and long lasting, meaning your business can start to transform immediately and your people can quickly learn to develop productive and collaborative behaviours – this builds a more resilient and profitable business.

Our Stepping into Your Authentic Leadership series of training programmes is a key part of this process of helping people to open their hearts.

Eudora and I moved in together in 2015, and her daughter Hanne became my stepdaughter. Two years later, Hanne imploded at the German school in west London. Despite being only eight, she couldn't see how school was helping her grow. Her dyslexia was a factor in this, along with her free spirit. Together with her father, we decided to home-school her for a couple of years. With Eudora being half-German and the fact that Germany has a much more varied school system, we decided that Hanne would be better off going to school there (when she was ready). We split our time between the UK and Germany, with Eudora home-schooling Hanne in Germany and Hanne's father doing the same in London. And then, in September 2020, Hanne started attending a school in Lindau, in South Germany, which meant that she and Eudora had to move there, with me continuing to split my time between the two countries.

Just before the first UK lockdown in March 2020, I was diagnosed with adrenal fatigue (effectively a burnout) and was advised that if I didn't take some time off work, I would become very ill. Having been about to cancel our forthcoming trip to Germany to join the team at the store as pandemic panic-buying took hold, I did an about-turn and went to Germany. I didn't expect to be away until August, but as soon as I stopped working, my whole system crashed. I listened to my body and did what I needed to do to recover.

Saying goodbye to Belsize Park

That summer, I had an approach from one of the major chains. They'd been trying to buy the store in Belsize Park for years. And while I hadn't been at all interested up to that point, this time they seemed more serious, and I started to wonder whether it was time to move on. It was becoming more and more difficult for an independent one-store food retailer to survive in London – what with continuous rent and rates pressures, retail moving online and the continued growth of discounters. And maybe, just maybe, the pressure of keeping the show on the road was taking its toll and had contributed to my adrenal fatigue. I realised I needed to do something radically different with the store or recognise that it was time to sell.

The year 2021 was a bit of a rollercoaster ride, and while the intentions of the multiple that wanted to buy the store were good, I didn't want almost 15 years' worth of work to be washed away. January was a particularly tough month. While two independents were interested in the store, for various reasons their offers were not viable. However, I knew that a new chapter was calling me. I needed more freedom and time to dedicate to sharing the heart approach with other businesses – but while I still owned the store, would this book ever get written?

It was with a strange combination of reluctance and gratitude that I accepted the offer from the multiple. Then, out of the blue, Irish retailer the Kavanagh Group (whom I had known for years) approached with an interest in buying the store. They wanted to carry on a lot of what I'd created and were open to me being involved in how they developed the business. They recognised that I had skills that they did not, while I recognised there was a lot that they could bring to the store. After a process that took almost a year, the Kavanagh Group bought the Belsize Park store in June 2021.

When I announced I was selling, I was bowled over by the emails

I received from people in our industry as well as customers. I want to share the two messages that touched me the most because I think they demonstrate what you can achieve when you run an open-hearted business. The first was from James Perry, chairman of COOK ready meals: 'You really have almost single-handedly shifted the Overton window in terms of what is thought possible in the UK grocery industry. I hope you are able to take a step back and celebrate an extraordinary achievement with Thornton's Budgens, maybe even rest a bit before you charge on, as you inevitably will. Can't wait to watch you climb the next mountain. Huge respect.'

(The term 'Overton window' refers to the range of policies regarded as acceptable in a particular sphere, often specifically used in that of politics.)

The other was from the distinguished actor Dame Janet Suzman, who was a customer as well as a big fan: 'I'm really most sorry to hear this and yet at the same time really pleased that you're passing on your expertise. Jack Lemmon, I think it was, once said: "When the elevator reaches the top floor it has to be sent down again to pick up the others", which is what you're doing, and bravo. Your changes have been thrilling to watch and your fresh thinking a tonic. So few people think out of the box, and you have, and you do. I wish you a marvellous second chapter to a terrific life, Andrew. I'm proud to know you.'

Having made my decision to sell the store, various companies approached me to offer their support and new doors began to open. As I write, I'm entering into a new cycle with excitement and uncertainty. After 30-plus years of being a CEO, I'm looking forward to being an advisor and non-executive director (NED) to a number of different organisations and to be able to dedicate more time to our Heart in Business work. And I know the roles I take on in the future need to be with businesses that want to be more heart centred.

Eudora's story

I've described how I met Eudora, but it's essential to know that, in addition to being my partner in life as well as in Heart in Business, she has 15 years of experience in coaching CEOs, board members, couples, families and individuals. She has studied organisational and individual change, psychology, coaching, cultural behaviour and economics in three countries and has a master's in international studies and diplomacy. Eudora spent more than 20 years developing and growing her Dare to Rethink methodology (helping individuals to understand who they are and rethink who they want to be).

She was born in Bonn, Germany, but moved to South Wales when she was six – an experience that she found extremely challenging, not least because she was bullied for being different. She found solace in a thought-provoking education at a Quaker boarding school, where she was surrounded by international students. She explains: 'I went on to study and work in three countries – Britain, Germany and France. I've worked in the public, private, charity and education sectors in all three countries. I later did a master's degree in London. I've never stopped learning different coaching and facilitation methods as well as business, economics and languages.'

She has experienced a great deal of loss in her life (her father died when she was 25, then her mother, followed by several close relatives and friends), and became a single parent in her early 30s. What motivates her is a desire to share what she has learnt from her experiences and to support others through their challenges.

'I remember the moment I met Andrew,' she says. 'He opened the door to me at an event and I knew he was the one. He was wearing a purple velvet jacket and I was convinced he was an English professor from Scotland! It took me two years to realise he wasn't an English professor from Scotland, and it took Andrew two years to realise I was the one he wanted to make a life with. Andrew

and I fit well together both at work and at home. I've always been passionate about encouraging businesses to be more heartful and assumed everyone else felt the same. Andrew has the same passion, and it's a delight to work and live with someone who shares this passion. It has become commonplace that my daughter, Andrew and I sit at the dinner table and discuss how being more connected to your feelings and more authentic in your communication, with a pinch of humour, can bring the necessary oil to any situation.'

A word about spirituality and trust

If you mention spirituality in a business context, it can often scare people. It comes into play for me because I believe we're all part of an interconnected system – we're not separate from animals, nature or the planet. It makes no difference whether you follow an organised religion or have your own spiritual practice; I believe we're all in this together and the actions I take have an impact on others, and that in turn comes back to impact me in some shape or form. This links to the concept of karma – defined (in Hinduism and Buddhism) as 'the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences' – i.e. what goes around comes around. My view is that there's a natural flow to life and if I'm open and aware of that, then I'll know what to do. I've learnt the hard way that if something seems like hard work on an ongoing basis, then something isn't working.

At the Crouch End store, we needed to take the fight to Waitrose and go deeper into what we stood for. There came a point when it felt like swimming upriver, and I realised I needed to let go and move on. At the time I was furious with Waitrose and their CEO Mark Price. I've subsequently got to know Mark and shared my deep gratitude with him because, if Waitrose hadn't opened a branch in Crouch End, I might still own two stores and wouldn't have had the time and space to develop Authentic Leadership or

write this book. So now, when things are tough and not flowing, I do try to step back and trust – asking myself, what does this mean, what can I learn from this, how do I need to shift course? This not only helps me shift but also reduces the stress of swimming against the flow. I can be slow to reach the point of trust and letting go, but I'm getting better at it. With hindsight, in the case of Crouch End I probably held on for a year more than was ideal – at personal cost to my health and wellbeing.

Eudora sees it like this: 'Have you ever heard a song, read a sentence, heard a child laugh or looked at a sunrise and felt a shiver down your spine, felt yourself connect more deeply to yourself and the world in that moment? These are the experiences that remind us what's real and what's important. To trust is to be willing to be affected by something. Spirituality is to recognise a feeling or sense that there is something greater than yourself. I have seen the Thornton's Budgens team step into greater trust and connectedness, where differences melted away and the joint purpose brought them together. This was particularly visible during moments of stress, for example when there was an attempted armed robbery in the store, or at the beginning of the Covid pandemic – but it was also there in the everyday when customers could feel the trust and connectedness.'

This matter of interrelatedness and spirituality is highly personal and whether you are with me on this or not doesn't actually matter. Assume for a second that we're all independent and not connected. If I believed that, I'd still feel that allowing people to be their authentic selves would be a good thing and make businesses function more effectively.

Personal Purpose

I believe that purpose is fundamentally linked to living an open-hearted life, and that it applies both to individuals and organisations. I also believe that the first step in the journey to becoming a heart-centred leader is to identify your personal purpose. According to most dictionaries, purpose means: 'The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.' Many companies and individuals use the words mission or vision for what I would call purpose, but in my view the key is having an overriding purpose/mission/vision that drives everything you do.

There's no set formula to finding your purpose, and I accept that it's probably the most difficult thing we'll ask you to do in this book. I know that, in our workshops, this is usually the part that participants find the hardest, so don't beat yourself up if it doesn't come to you straight away. In an ideal world, finding your personal purpose would be the first step on the journey to becoming a heart-centred leader, but don't worry if it's not clear at the start. Work on other areas and trust that it will become clear to you

when the time is right. For me, a purpose is a set of words that I can connect to, that mean something to me. So, I encourage you to do the exercises and write down some words that mean something to you, without worrying about the quality of the words or comparing them to someone else's. We've deliberately given you quite a few exercises in this chapter, so complete the ones that appeal to you and keep making notes as insights come to you.

My search for purpose stemmed from my midlife crisis, which was brought on by feeling a sense of incompleteness as well as the pain of going through a divorce and the break-up of my family. I kept asking myself, 'What's the point? Why do I work so hard yet still feel empty inside?' Since then, I've been searching for what's missing and do feel I'm getting closer to it. As part of the process, I've come to believe that we're all here on this planet at this time for a reason. I only realised this in my late 40s, and yet many people will die without ever having considered this or finding out what their purpose is.

A few years ago, I co-facilitated a life purpose workshop for a group of business leaders with my colleague, Ralph. When some of the group seemed a bit daunted by the task, Ralph used the words 'ways of being', which means how you choose to be in the world and live your life. For a number of people, the lights came on and this seemed less grand than finding a life purpose, so it might work for you too. In this context, ways of being are defined as: 'Reflecting what's going on for you internally [your mental and emotional state, your thoughts and how you feel in your body], and how you respond – what you think, say and do.'

The magic of *ikigai* and *Shantaram*

The Japanese have a word for life purpose – *ikigai*, which literally means 'a reason for being'. I have also heard it described as 'the reason I get up in the morning'.

Figure 1 shows how this works. It's really simple – if you find yourself in the sweet spot where the four circles intersect, then

you're more likely to find yourself springing out of bed in the morning, full of joy! Let me use the example of my midlife crisis to illustrate this – with the proviso that I'm doing this with the benefit of hindsight, as I wasn't aware of this way of thinking at the time.

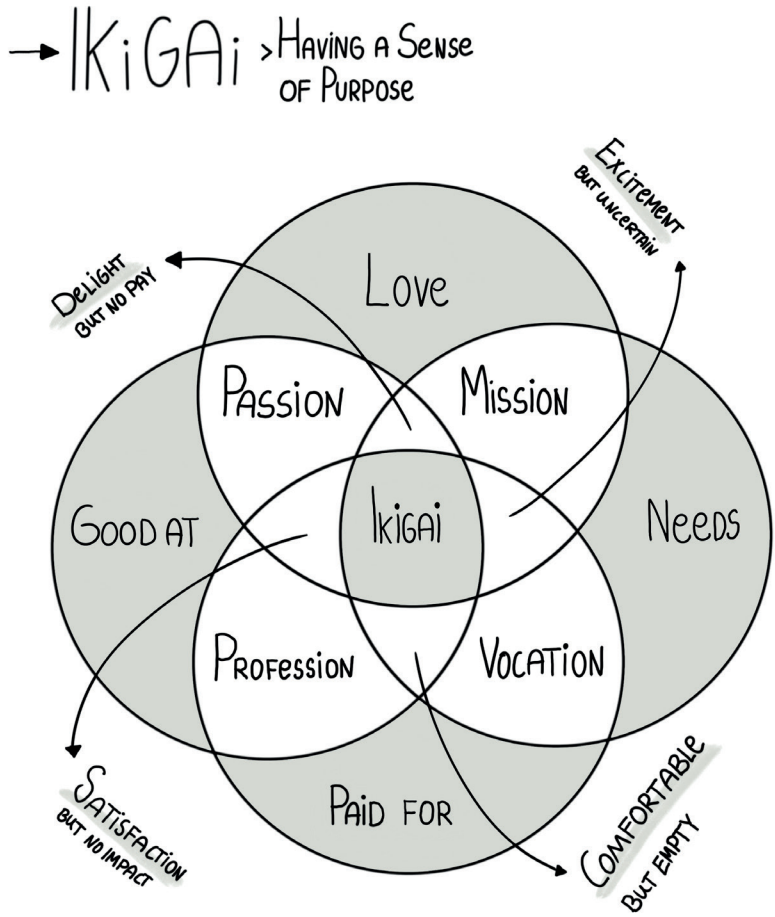

Figure 1: Ikigai

At the consultancy, I was very good at what I did and, for 14 of the 16 years I was there, loved it. The last two years were harder, and that was probably connected to the third circle – 'Does the world

need this?' I found myself getting more and more disillusioned with our clients' motivation for commissioning our work. Was it just a box-ticking exercise? Was it really going to make a difference in the world and to people's lives? (I must stress these were my feelings and no reflection on the quality of the work we did.) The final circle is 'What I can be paid for'. That certainly worked for me in the consultancy, where I mostly earned good money – in fact, a lot more than I have earned since – but even with a big pay cheque, it was not enough to compensate for the lack of fulfilment in the other circles. Looking at Figure 1, the phrase 'comfortable but empty' would have resonated with me while I sat in my garden by the sea all those years ago. Had I known about this model then, using it might have helped me become clearer about why I wasn't feeling fulfilled and give me some clues as to what I should do with my life.

> YOUR TURN: *Create a purpose section in your journal. Look at the ikigai model: how does your life pan out in each of the four circles? How do you feel when you do this? Do any of the comments on the chart resonate with you? Is there anything in your life that you need to change?*

Another perspective can be found in one of my all-time favourite books – *Shantaram*, by David Gregory Roberts, a former heroin addict and convicted bank robber who escaped from jail in Australia and fled to India. The main protagonist, Lin, operates various illegal activities as part of a gang, and the book is clearly somewhat autobiographical. The gang have their own spiritual guru, Idriss, and in the sequel, *The Mountain Shadow*, Idriss poses the question: 'What is the purpose of life?' In answer to his own question, he replies that the purpose of life is to 'express a positive set of characteristics'. When asked to define these positive characteristics, he says that they are found wherever people 'live humanely with one another'. In simple terms, the invitation is to

identify your positive characteristics and live them as fully as you can. This caused me to consider what my positive characteristics might be. They include: the ability to open my heart; being a visionary and seeing things before others can; being a good storyteller; being able to connect the spiritual and business worlds; wanting to make a difference in the world. And while I was already clear on my purpose when I read Idriss's words, this list certainly fits well with it.

> YOUR TURN: *In the purpose section of your journal, write down your positive characteristics. Be generous and include everything that occurs to you (without editing it – no one but you will read this). Take your time – and keep coming back to this so you can add to the list.*

Eudora's insights into purpose

Eudora is familiar with the feelings of emptiness I've experienced on my journey. A lot of clients come to her because their lives lack meaning or direction. 'They say that they feel empty inside and are searching for something on the outside,' she explains. 'They feel unhappy and lost, and my job is to help them find or rediscover their life purpose.' She sees purpose as much more than a professional path: 'It's an overriding statement that speaks to and impacts all parts of your life, including how you show up at work, how you are with your family, your friends, yourself and even complete strangers. Purpose is your "why". It sums up what's behind who you are and what you do. It's the reason you get up in the morning and what keeps you going when you feel like giving up.' There is, she says, a subtle difference between mission, purpose and vision: 'Purpose keeps you focused on why you exist; it's the why behind the action. Vision is the ability to plan the future with imagination and aligns you with your purpose. Mission is how you will accomplish it, the action you need to take.'

Having a clear purpose helps you cut through the chaos and decide where to focus your energy. It can also strengthen your resolve and support you in achieving your dreams: 'We are all born with a purpose and some of us have the good fortune to stay connected to it from an early age,' says Eudora. 'Unfortunately, most of us forget or become disconnected from it because of other people's expectations. It can take many years to start listening to that small inner voice inviting us to rediscover and reconnect to our calling.

'Andrew and I had the good fortune to meet Bernardine Evaristo on the night she won the Booker Prize. We had read and loved her book *Girl, Woman, Other*, and when Andrew saw her before the announcement, he wished her luck and they hugged. She was open, humble and as excited as a schoolgirl. It took Bernardine 60 years to finally be recognised on the world stage for her body of work. Her latest book, *Manifesto*, is about never giving up. She says that there's a manifesto in each of us – a knitted patchwork of our life experiences, the generations that came before us, the struggles we've experienced and the hope for a better future for all. I see this manifesto as another way of describing personal purpose. I also believe that the less privileged in society have the greatest need for a personal purpose or manifesto. The more privileged you are, the less you need to fight to understand your drive and direction because so much is already available to you. Ironically, however, having it all can lead to an empty feeling inside. I continue to be moved by Bernardine and others who have used their experiences to fuel their desire for change. Do you dare to rethink and change?'

Finding your purpose

Step one in the process of finding your purpose is to acknowledge the need or desire for one. You also have to start clearing out old habits and ways of being to get clarity on your purpose. Most of the exercises in this book will help you clear out the old so you can

welcome in the new. A crisis can provide the crunch point, something that leads you to question what life is all about. Time out from your normal routine can also help with the development process.

As magical things always happen when I go to India, my current purpose was refined on an eight-day walk with business leaders along the river Narmada – which was definitely time out of my normal routine. The current iteration of my purpose is as follows: 'I am a visionary heart surgeon: I help leaders heal so that they can help others shine. I am a student, a teacher and a storyteller.' As I'm all about putting the heart back into business, the implication here is that the heart is somehow blocked – hence the need for a heart surgeon. The need to help leaders heal so that they can help others shine will hopefully become clear to you as you read on. The last part comes from my desire to keep learning as well as teach – I believe that being on a continuous learning quest keeps me feeling alive and fresh. Finally, I wanted to acknowledge that, as an Irishman, I'm a natural storyteller and that storytelling is a powerful way to motivate people to look at things differently.

Eudora's purpose is rather beautiful: 'I unknot knots to bring direction, flow and purpose to your life by uncovering your gold together.' As a child she loved unknotting knots and remembers lying awake thinking about how she could best tackle a particular knot. This obsession was channelled into knitting, and she still loves the challenge of turning thousands of knots into a jumper, scarf or hat. She also found her childhood experiences confusing and often felt very knotted inside, not understanding the emotions she was experiencing. It was only as a young woman that she started to feel safe, loved and seen. Her knots started to fall away, and she began to understand the reasons why they were there.

'I assumed everyone knew their purpose and it was only later that I realised this is not the case,' she says. 'It was when my knots started to soften that I was able to be present and start focusing on my purpose and what I love doing. I know what it feels like to be so knotted inside that you are frozen in fear, sadness and anger, unable

to move. I want to enable others to unknot themselves so that they can become clear on their flow and purpose and fill that hole inside. I feel an immense sense of delight, pride and achievement every time one of my clients' knots falls away. I enjoy watching the relief and realisation in their eyes as they understand that particular knot and why it's no longer serving them. They become lighter, stand taller in the world and start making purposeful strides forward. This is my desire for us all.'

Uncovering core wounds

Another important step in discovering your purpose is to identify and understand your core wounds. So, what exactly is a core wound? 'We all fall down and hurt ourselves many times in our lives,' says Eudora. 'We can pretend we never fell, but the scars will still be there to tell the tale. We need to process the emotions attached to an experience in order to move forward. If we don't, these unprocessed emotions will leak out when we least expect or want them to. This is the nature of a core wound.'

One of Eudora's core wounds was created when her father died. She says: 'I had no one to mourn with and felt very alone. For a long time, I wanted to stay in the pain and suffering because it was the only way I could stay connected to my father. Slowly, over time, I did go through the pain and found a new way of being, with my father in my heart.' As a result, she has found her strength, power and purpose. The painful experiences of her life have shaped who she is today and how she shows up as a friend, mother, partner, coach and sister. 'The way we respond to the pain and difficulty of our core wounds can connect us to our true calling,' she says.

> YOUR TURN: *In your journal, write down the things in your past that have wounded you and caused you great pain. Write about how they impacted you then and how they impact you now. This may be uncomfortable but stick with it.*

When I developed my purpose, I wasn't really thinking about my core wounds, but I can see some connections now. There's no doubt that I failed to shine in the Irish school system – I didn't get the chance to be in flow at school (other than during my two years in Holland) and my positive characteristics were deeply hidden – having had a taste of what this could be like in Holland made the rest of my school days in Ireland even more painful. Access to my creativity was shut down until I went to university, and with that, my heart closed too. This experience has helped me to focus on helping others to open their hearts, to always shine and be the best of themselves. And it also explains why I'm so keen to keep on learning. I think my storyteller emerged from the desire to get attention, and while this wasn't always the case, I think I am now using that particular wound to positive effect.

Finding your flow

You can also apply the concept of flow to the development of your personal purpose. Being 'in flow' means you're engaging in an activity that you love, and you become so absorbed in what you're doing that you lose track of time. You become one with that activity and everything around you. The concept has existed for hundreds of years, but it was Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who popularised it. He observed musicians in an orchestra and asked the question: 'Why are they happy?' He found that they were doing what they loved, with a clear purpose, and concluded that happiness = purpose + flow. He talks about the juxtaposition between challenge and skill and how, if you find a balance between the two, you can get into your flow channel. However, if you are over-challenged and don't have the required skill, you may feel anxious. And if you engage in an activity that involves less skill, you may become bored. He also talks about an activity that you love growing from being pleasurable to a passion, and leading to your higher purpose. If we're encouraged to experience and live our purpose, we grow

into the best of ourselves. However, all too often, as children we're pushed in other directions and burdened with expectations that don't belong to us.

Eudora's experience with her daughter, Hanne, illustrates this. Hanne has always loved drawing and often loses track of time while she's doing it. She forgets to eat or drink and becomes lost in her own world. In fact, when things become overwhelming for her, drawing helps her reconnect to herself. It was when Hanne stopped drawing that Eudora realised there was a serious problem. 'Hanne was heading towards a breakdown,' Eudora remembers. 'She didn't want to go to school, and when she was there, she hid under the table. We knew we needed to do something but didn't know what. Then I discovered Hanne writing a list of the children in her class. She told me she was struggling with the pressure at school and that she wasn't the only one. She thought that if she got all the children in her class to sign this paper and brought it to the headteacher, they would do something about the pressure.' That's when Eudora, myself and Hanne's father decided to home-school her. When we found the perfect school for Hanne in Germany she started drawing again and expressing her creativity. She has now rediscovered her passion, flow and purpose.

> YOUR TURN: *In your journal, note the challenges you have faced as an individual and ask how these challenges have connected or reconnected you to your passion, your purpose, your flow, and your relationship to something greater than yourself.*

Connecting to your creative flow can produce extraordinary results, says Eudora: 'My creativity flows through me either into the thing I'm creating – whether it's a knitted jumper, a sewn scarf, a piece of writing or the work I'm doing with a client. When I'm in this flow, I feel amazing. Worries and insecurities melt away. It's as if I step out of the way and let something far greater than me

express itself.' However, there are times when she's not in flow: 'In fact, I'm rather grumpy,' she says. 'In these moments, everything is hard. I break a cup, I forget to buy the very item I went into town to get, I almost bump the car, everything takes twice as long.'

> YOUR TURN: *Take a moment to think of times in your life when everything flowed, everything felt easy. And then think about moments when it didn't flow, when life seemed difficult. How did it feel in your body? What was different?*

If only we could capture the essence of what gets us into our flow and bottle it so that whenever we feel disconnected and grumpy, we could uncork the bottle and take a gulp of flow. Here's an exercise to help you start connecting to your flow.

> YOUR TURN: *Find a quiet space and time when you won't be disturbed. Put all your devices away and have your journal to hand. Sit comfortably, with an open body posture and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes and become aware of your breath. Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out. Become aware of your breath and your body. Taking another deep breath in, think back to when you were young. What were the things that you loved doing? When could you lose yourself and lose all sense of time? Travel back to the moments when you felt most connected to yourself and your environment. When you have connected to these memories, start writing. Don't think about what you're writing; let the pen do the work. Once you feel complete, put down your pen and read what you've written. Notice what jumps out of the page. What insights have you had?*

Business leaders and their purpose

To give you some further guidance on purpose, I asked each of the business leaders I interviewed about their purpose in life. I received a variety of answers, which goes to show how personal it is. Here are a few:

Rita Clifton, deputy chair John Lewis Partnership, chairman BrandCap and NED for a number of other companies: 'My fundamental personal purpose is that I'd like to save the world. I want to make the world a better place. It has been the same since I was seven, and I'm sure it'll be the same when I'm 70. To be more specific, I want to make business more human on every level – caring about the planet, about people, about helping society move forward. A big part of making businesses more human is making sure we have more women running organisations – to change the chemical balance at the top of all companies and nations. When you have 96 per cent of major organisations and 93 per cent of countries run by men, something is seriously out of whack. We need balance.'

Chris Martin, former Musgrave CEO, NED at Wilko, ABP Food Group and other companies: 'At this point my personal purpose is to give something back, to use my experience and skills. My business purpose is to use those skills to help businesses confront the challenges and opportunities ahead. Overall, it's to have some fun and to live a full-on family life alongside my business life.'

Justin King, former Sainsbury's CEO and NED at Marks & Spencer and other companies: 'My purpose is entirely self-serving – I look in the mirror and test whether I've done the best with the talents I've been given – and that I don't just use them for myself but also for my family and the community that I'm part of. It's my definition of self-actualisation, rather than a purpose.'

Charles Wilson, former Booker CEO: 'My personal purpose is that I like doing the job well.' (Charles told me it was a family joke that whether he is sweeping the yard, or running a company or a charity, he always wants to do a great job.)

Vittoria Varalli, VP of Canadian grocer Sobey's: 'My personal ethos is that I spend my life enabling the potential of others – both at work, to enable my team to become the best version of themselves, and outside work, where I am the interim chair of the UN Association of Canada. I feel passionate about the sustainable development goal on gender equality and take part in grassroots activity around this.'

Aileen Richards, NED at Samworth Brothers, Pret a Manger and other companies; former global head of People & Organisation at Mars: 'My personal purpose in a business context is to be really passionate with messages about the importance of good leadership, behaviours and talent – if you have that, anything is possible. It's to demonstrate that the world can be better through running good companies with good leadership.'

Roger Whiteside, CEO of Greggs: 'I have no idea what my purpose in life is. Yes, it does bother me and leads me into bigger questions. I'm 62 and still don't know what I want to do when I leave school! I've never known what I was going to do – I've always done what seems the right thing to do at the time, following the line of least resistance. I've had a great and enjoyable career in retailing – but it could've been anywhere. Is it too late? If I haven't got it so far, will I now? Maybe, maybe not!'

I love Roger's honesty – and it shows that you can have a successful career without knowing what your purpose is. However, if you want to be a heart-centred leader, I recommend that you do take the time to reflect on it if you can.

Personal purpose versus business purpose

One question I'm often asked is whether purpose relates to your work or your whole life. A number of the leaders quoted above make a distinction between business and personal purpose. My belief is that this separation is artificial. When I'm on the ski hill or walking in the woods pondering life – is that work or not? As I sit here writing, I'm working, but I'm also having fun and feeling energised. I feel my purpose relates to my whole life and that feels right. I encourage you to trust the process of finding your purpose and see what emerges over time. And if you have a burning desire for clarity, find yourself a training course or programme that can help you along your way. You could, for example, join our next Stepping into Your Authentic Leadership programme. We'll be looking at organisational purpose in Chapter 5.

Purpose beyond business

While this book is focused on business, I believe everything we say here can be applied to the whole of life. Looking at the world of sport, I'm reminded of a powerful interview with Formula 1 World Champion Lewis Hamilton on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme in July 2021. He shared how he'd started to question his purpose: 'My whole life I've been driven to winning these races, and now I've been winning races and championships… it's very short lived when you win. You're then on to the next one. I've always wondered what it all means, why was I chosen to have the ability I have, to be the only black driver to get into this sport, and not only that, to be at the front. What does that really mean; what am I supposed to be doing with that?' He has started to address this issue with the Hamilton Commission, which he set up in 2019 to increase the representation of black people in F1. Of the 40,000 who currently work in the industry, only one per cent are black. He also recalled

his time at school, when none of his teachers were black and he had no role models he could relate to: 'I look back at my young self and wish it had been different – if I could change that, that would be the most valuable thing for me personally.' He realised that creating this change was his life purpose, the reason why he was here. He ended the interview with: 'That would be my legacy.' While people don't usually think about their legacy until they're in their 50s, Hamilton stands out as impressive and forward-thinking at just 36. I believe that reflecting on your legacy is a way to focus on your purpose. What do you want to be remembered for? I'll answer this question from my own perspective in the final chapter.

A word about money

To conclude our investigation into personal purpose, I need to mention the m-word. I don't believe money can make you happy or that making money can be your purpose in life. In fact, every study I've seen shows that once you get beyond the basic amount you need to pay for a roof over your head, clothes on your back and food in your belly (the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs), money doesn't make that much difference to your levels of happiness. If you look at studies about what people appreciate about their jobs, money rarely makes it into the top three. Factors such as being appreciated by your manager or colleagues, doing a job that makes a difference and working with people you like all tend to beat money every time.

In 2016, the UK Government replaced the minimum wage with the living wage and set a four-year timeline to move the hourly rate from £6.70 in stages to £9.00. This was absolutely the right thing to do – you try living on £6.70 per hour. As a store owner, it posed a challenge, as we were already paying above the minimum wage. Then Lidl made a bold move – they immediately raised everyone to the £9.00 level (versus stage one, which was £7.20), four years ahead of schedule. I know other independent retailers in London

who lost plenty of people as a result, but we didn't lose a single person. Despite the attraction of £1.80 extra per hour (which at 25 per cent more is not inconsiderable), each of my team felt that the benefits of staying at Thornton's Budgens outweighed the extra cash. I have to say I was really proud of what we'd achieved in that moment.

Eudora has a different perspective on money, having experienced a period in her life when she was a single parent on benefits, with no secure housing and without the ability to earn money because she was caring for an 18-month-old child: 'I know what it's like to feel terrified about where the next £5 would come from,' says Eudora. 'Now I see that, like so many things, money will continue to remain unequal in a society that doesn't include or properly count women and ethnic minorities. In his book, *The Uncounted*, Alex Cobham wrote about these damaging inequalities; and in her book *Invisible Women*, Caroline Criado Perez wrote about the gender data gap that exists in society. This absence of data means that officially, legally and politically the uncounted don't exist. Ethnic minorities and women most often fall into the poorest bracket of society, so they are the most disenfranchised. However, evidence shows that when the invisible and uncounted are represented it saves society, governments and business money. Poor quality and missing data are impacting us all in far greater ways than we can imagine. We as a society have a choice to change this bias and save money at the same time.'

I do feel privileged that I've never had to worry about where the next £5 would come from. However, I know that several people who worked in the store sometimes experienced financial challenges. I remember one of the team sharing with me that he only had £3 in his bank account and two kids to feed, which makes it even more extraordinary that no one at Thornton's Budgens was tempted by the Lidl offer. We also had a couple of loan schemes in place, which helped people with everything from affording their next meal to getting on the property ladder. And while we always

aimed to pay above the minimum wage, if I had my time again, I would have focused more on what we could have done to improve everyone's pay. I would have offered everyone a 10 per cent rise for three months, funded from reserves or by myself, on the basis that we'd then have had three months to work together to generate the additional sales/profit to cover the rise. If we hadn't succeeded, everyone's pay would have had to revert to the old levels. Although I believe that, with everyone's focus behind this goal of better pay, we would have generated those funds.

In Eudora's first interview with a member of the Thornton's Budgens team, Sadia talks about how job opportunities at the store provided her family with financial independence.

A quick comment about the team interviews. Eudora did these to ensure they were a bit more objective. When I first read them, I was very humbled, moved to tears and a bit embarrassed about publishing some of the gushing comments about me. I will live with that embarrassment, as they are speaking from the heart and sharing the impact of this journey on their lives.

Thornton's Budgens team interview #1

Name: Sadia Ahmed
Nationality: UK born Bangladeshi
Position: Cashier
Length of service: Four years (from the age of 16)

I was appointed an internal coach at Thornton's Budgens and received coaching myself during this time, which I found very helpful. It boosted my self-confidence and added value to what I was doing. There was a deep connection with my coach, who asked open-ended questions. I felt comfortable talking about any type of situation and it changed how I see the world. I started to think outside the box and was motivated to work harder. I wanted to meet the needs of the customer and started to think about how I could help other people. I felt I was part of a wider cause.

I knew I could always talk to my coach about any situation and that she'd help me see it from a different perspective. I started to look at things differently and realised I could solve things without being condescending or abrupt. I realised that difficult situations could be resolved calmly and collectively. I noticed my colleagues changing, too. They became aware of the bigger picture. They gained more respect for Andrew as they saw him helping people grow and supporting the community. They saw that even when Andrew was struggling and facing financial strain, he was there for the team and the community. They saw that Andrew was making a difference.

The staff faced stressful situations when customers were unhappy that the self-checkouts didn't work properly, or the plastic-free bags broke. We set about seeing the positive and creating solutions. These kinds

of challenging situations brought us together. We learnt to communicate better. This approach to coaching and growth has given me hope. I know there are good people out there who aren't just interested in profit but who also consider the health and professional development of their people. Andrew's approach to business has motivated me to help others.

I feel a deep gratitude towards Andrew. He gave my mother a job and believed in her when she was at her lowest. She was unqualified and a single mother. His continued support of my mother meant that there was always food on our table. Other members of my family also worked in Thornton's Budgens. This was our first experience of work and was our starting point towards financial independence. People often don't consider why someone wants a job. When Andrew gave my mother a job, he gave the whole family hope.

The Foundations of Authentic Leadership

The concept of Authentic Leadership that Eudora and I have developed has evolved over six years of trial and error. It builds on my 10-plus years of personal development work and many more years than that for Eudora. I'm aware that Authentic Leadership is a term that's being used more and more in business – so when I use those words, with initial capitals, I'm referring to the specific approach we have developed. We haven't protected the intellectual property for this approach as we both believe in open-source sharing. Eudora defines Authentic Leadership as: 'Leaders who are genuine, self-aware, transparent and live out all parts of their lives with integrity.' She believes that we can all choose to be leaders in our lives.

This chapter outlines the background to Authentic Leadership and gives you a series of exercises that you can complete to help you become more authentic in the way that you lead. Our work is a blend of many different models and concepts, so what follows is our take on how we function as human beings, inspired by

what we've personally observed at work. It has helped us better understand our inner workings and therefore how to help people develop their leadership.

1. Identifying triggers

Once you have reflected on your purpose and how you might achieve a state of flow, it's vital to develop your psychological and emotional self-awareness. This is about how you deal with and process your emotions, how you respond to others and how you behave. In fact, awareness is the first step towards changing how you react and respond to life. With awareness comes choice – the choice to change how you approach your life. Without awareness, you can't make that choice.

We'll start with triggers. Triggers are emotional reactions, often strong bodily reactions to external or internal stimuli. We perceive those stimuli as either positive or negative. There are three types of trigger: external (taking place outside your body), internal (taking place inside your mind) and deliberately self-created. Though the experience is either external or in your mind, the reaction is an emotional response felt in the body. Eudora has found that initially many of her clients are unaware of their bodily reactions but, over time, they rediscover how to listen to their body and emotions. Then they start to have a choice about how to respond to a situation or stimulus. The first two types of trigger can't be controlled, but can be understood and mastered. The advantage of the last type is that you can self-create a trigger from a predetermined stimulus or situation. Understanding why you're reacting to a situation gives you self-awareness and choice. You can decide to make a change by using the information that the trigger is giving you, responding differently and making more productive decisions.

One of our greatest sources of learning has been COR, the US-based personal growth company. We have both attended many of their training programmes and I now have the honour of being

part of their leadership team as a non-executive director (NED). Founders Britta and Lee Eskey look at triggers this way: 'Staying mindful when we're triggered is a hard thing to do. We may need something stronger than simply tracking our body sensations – we may even need to create some.'

They suggest doing the following exercise when you feel triggered: *Press your feet into the ground, rub your hands together, do some stretching or exercise. Take deeper breaths into the belly. You may even splash some cold water on your face, get some air or safely let out some intense emotion.*

You can begin to understand why you get triggered by looking at how your brain functions. There's still a lot that we don't know about the brain, but we do know that it is divided into three parts: the neocortex, the limbic system and the primitive brain. The neocortex is the thinking part of our brain, where creativity and the ability to lie coexist. This is the part of the brain that makes us human. The limbic system is the unconscious, reactive part of the brain where triggers occur. It responds to the world around you and stores memories. By going deeper into how the limbic system works, you can find ways to understand and control your triggers. This part of the brain has evolved in order to respond to and stay alive in dangerous situations. This is often referred to as the fight, flight or freeze response – but there's also a mechanism to enhance positive experiences. Eudora explains: 'Imagine a child reading a book. As they do this, they might be twirling their hair, sucking their thumb or stroking their ear. These actions are enriching the experience and creating a pacifier, also known as an adaptive behaviour. The child is unconsciously creating a link between a positive experience and a pacifier. It's in moments of stress that the pacifier or adaptive behaviour reappears as a form of coping mechanism to help the child feel less stressed.'

The limbic system automatically creates a link between a positive experience and a pacifier/adaptive behaviour. You can use this process to consciously create a connection so that when you

experience an event or situation, it automatically links to a particular reaction. You're actually creating a trigger. This is useful because you can change how you react to a stimulus. If you do this enough times, you can create a new habit and change an old pattern.

2. The HEAL process

The process Eudora uses to create links in her brain is based on what happens naturally in the limbic system. Developed by Rick Hanson, it's called the HEAL process (the acronym is from the first letter of each step), and it can help you create a positive experience and avoid negative triggers.

> YOUR TURN: *Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Sit comfortably, with an open body posture, and close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out. Become aware of your breath. Bring your breath deep into the base of your belly.*
>
> ***Step 1: Have or think of a positive experience*** *– one that you're experiencing right now, a memory, something you've read in a book or seen in a film, or even something you've made up. It doesn't matter, as they all sit in the same place in your brain. What's important is that you can fully experience it with all your senses.*
>
> ***Step 2: Enrich it*** *– stay in this experience and then spend 5-10 seconds longer in it. Open up your body and all your senses to the experience. Notice what you can see, taste, touch, smell and hear.*
>
> ***Step 3: Absorb it*** *– allow yourself to be completely submerged in the experience and become the experience. At this point you can choose to stop and enjoy the experience*

> *or go to step 4, where you actively create a link with a difficult or negative experience and create a new reaction.*
>
> ***Step 4: Link positive and negative material*** *– choose a difficult situation where you'd like to experience a different reaction. While remaining deeply in the positive experience, take a deep breath and open your body and senses to this positive experience. Take another deep breath in and a deep breath out. Focus only a small amount of attention on the difficult or negative experience that's in the background. Consciously make a link between the positive and the negative experience knowing that all is well.*

Eudora created a new relationship with her panic attacks by using the above process. 'I hate crossing bridges, flying, walking through long tunnels or standing near very tall buildings,' she explains. 'Sometimes, when I am travelling on my own, I become completely overwhelmed and my system starts to shut down. As a child I learnt that it was dangerous to express too much emotion in front of other people, so when I'm in the middle of a panic attack, the last thing I want to do is ask a stranger for help. Once I've had a panic attack in a particular place or situation, it becomes harder to return there, as I'm frightened that it will happen again.'

She knew she needed to make a change and decided to use every opportunity to link positive emotions to the negative situations and places: 'One evening Andrew and I attended a black tie awards ceremony,' she recalls. 'As we were leaving the Tube station, I had a flashback to a memory of me having a panic attack at this very same station. I asked Andrew if we could stop for a moment. I held his arm and felt the strength and warmth of his body next to mine. I breathed in the night air and opened my body to experience the moment with all my senses. And then I looked up at the tall buildings, creating a link between the buildings and the positive experience I was having.' As a result, she enjoyed the

awards evening, and every time she noticed herself enjoying it, she repeated the 'have, enrich and absorb' steps of the process. Try it yourself and see how you get on.

At the end of this chapter, you can read the second of Eudora's interviews with key members of the team at Thornton's Budgens. Kate has worked on her triggers and says that she now takes time to evaluate a situation at work before responding.

3. Our shadows

If you watch young kids at play, they're full of the joys of spring – in the moment and totally free. They fall, they cry, they pick themselves up and start playing again. Then, at around the age of seven, we start to become aware of norms and how other people would like us to behave. Parents and teachers say things like 'Big boys don't cry' or 'Don't get angry' and 'Don't be sad, everything will be fine.' We start to pick up the message that it's not OK to cry, be angry or sad. These become emotions and behaviours we want to avoid, and they disappear into what Carl Jung first described as the shadow. The desire to cry, be angry or sad doesn't go away; it just goes out of our conscious awareness.

As kids, we're often told not to be selfish – but there are aspects of selfishness that are important, such as self-care (see Chapter 4). When my kids were young, there was always a lot to be done at home – yet three or four times a week, I would make sure I went running to keep myself fit. Every time I did that, I could've been accused of being selfish, yet I believed that I needed to keep myself in shape to be the best father, boss, colleague and husband I could be. Selfish or self-care?

I grew up in Ireland, where the general attitude was: 'Don't be angry, be happy – and shit happens.' I spent years suppressing my anger, as I felt it wouldn't be welcome. Instead of it going away, it leaked out in a passive-aggressive way – which is deeply unpleasant for anyone on the receiving end. What I've learnt, only

recently, is that it's better to express my anger cleanly and clearly – 'I'm really angry because you said we were going to have a date night tonight and at the last minute you said some work had come up and you needed to cancel' – rather than sulk. My learning has been dramatically improved by living with Eudora and Hanne because Germans don't understand why you would not just say it how it is. It's hard to take sometimes, but refreshing when you get used to it. So, anger often hides in my shadow, along with the 'good boy'. When I was growing up, like many, our household was a busy one. I was the eldest of four; my father was involved in exporting and travelled a lot. So, to get my parents' attention, I developed the 'good boy' strategy – thinking that if I was really good, helpful and unselfish, I'd get more attention. It's a reasonable and fairly common strategy to have as a child. However, without realising it, I took the good boy into my adult life and tried to please everyone, even if they didn't ask me to, and then I'd (passive-aggressively) resent them for it.

As we move into adulthood, it's important that we understand which childhood strategies we developed to gain love and evaluate whether they're still appropriate. Jung has developed a whole body of work around the shadow, where the principle is that if you can see your shadow, it won't trip you up – but if you can't, it will! My tendency to be a good boy will never go away – but now I have the awareness to spot it, generally before I over-commit. Sometimes I just smile to myself, and at other times I will share with someone that I've noticed there is a (younger) part of me that wants to please them by doing XYZ.

> YOUR TURN: *See if you can identify a recurring behaviour of yours, something you do so often that if you were really honest about it, you'd rather you didn't do it. Notice it and observe it in action – even share it with one or two people close to you. See how it feels to do this.*

If you'd like to dig deeper into this subject, an excellent starting point is *Warrior, Magician, Lover, King* by Rod Boothroyd (see Resources).

4. The inner critic

Ever hear that voice inside your head telling you that you are useless, rubbish and don't deserve to be in this job/relationship? This is the inner critic – the voice that gnaws away at our self-confidence. In his excellent book on the subject, *Make Peace with Your Mind*, Mark Coleman describes some of his early discoveries about the inner critic: 'It was the practice of mindfulness that made me aware of the tyrannical self-judgments that were making my life miserable.' He went on to recognise how hard he was on himself and the impossibly high standards he had set for himself. Sound familiar? As with your shadow, it's good to get to know your inner critic and befriend them. Mine is called Dirk. And while we know each other well and mostly work things out together, there are times when he takes over and gives me hell. And he can also affect how I am with others. When he's in the driving seat, we're never going to get anywhere. When I was discussing this with Rita Clifton from the John Lewis Partnership, she told me: 'I have this constant fear of running out of money. Even though I'm past 60, and busier than I've ever been, the imposter on my shoulder says: "You can't do that – you'll get found out." And even though we have more money than my parents could ever have dreamed of, I'm always worrying we're going to lose it – because I lost a parent at 12 and we were left in a lot of debt. I always worried money would disappear, so there's a drive to keep on earning.'

What is your inner critic/imposter telling you? If this subject touches you and you'd like some more help with getting to know your inner critic, I can highly recommend Mark Coleman's book.

YOUR TURN: *Tune in and listen to some of your internal voices and write down what they have to say. Is any of it true? Really? Can you really have come this far in life by being so useless?*

5. Ego states

An Authentic Leader needs to develop an awareness of their ego states. In this context, ego is defined as: 'A person's self-image, self-esteem and self-importance.' Ego states emerged through a theory developed by Eric Berne, the founder of transactional analysis (TA). He divided the ego into three parts: the Child, the Adult and the Parent. He said we are always acting from at least one of these parts and that this leads to a reaction in the person we're interacting with.

- The **Child** ego state kicks in when we feel bad, childlike or anxious. It's connected to our memories and the ways in which we behaved when we were young. When we're in our Child, we respond immaturely to situations. How we felt, thought and behaved as a child gets replayed, even when we're adults.
- In the **Adult** ego state, we're rational, aware of our surroundings and our body. Our feelings and actions are appropriate to the situation that we find ourselves in. When we're in our Adult, we can pause and think through how to respond in a rational way. We're aware of ourselves and our impact on others.
- In the **Parent** ego state, we find ourselves feeling, talking and thinking like one of our parents or significant parental figures. We can go into Parent if the emotion that's triggered is one that a parent also had. If your father was an angry man, then you might behave like him when you're angry. We react rather than think in a situation. These behaviours are copied, learnt or borrowed from significant parental figures.

Your ego state has an effect on those around you. If you're in your Adult, then this encourages others to respond from their Adult. If you're in your Child, this can trigger those with whom you interact and can invite them unconsciously to respond by going into their Parent. If you're in your Parent, this can awaken Child behaviour in those with whom you interact. 'I've noticed that if I go out into the world and interact from my Adult, then my day flows and I have healthy, productive exchanges with others,' explains Eudora, who is qualified in the use of TA. 'However, if I'm triggered and find myself in either Parent or Child, then those around me respond to that state by taking the opposite position. In my Child, perhaps feeling rebellious, I might be met with a controlling Parent. Or if I become a righteous Parent, I might be met by an immature Child.'

I remember a time when I was feeling overwhelmed by my never-ending to-do list. On top of that our week had been turned upside-down with Hanne being unwell and off school, and it was the day of my weekly visit to the local food market in Germany, which was the last thing I needed to do. I'll let Eudora tell the story: 'Andrew's overwhelm was stopping him from being present, grounded and in his Adult. I knew from experience that going to a busy market and having to speak German was going to end badly if he approached it from this triggered state. So, he talked through what he was feeling overwhelmed about, meditated, went for a swim in our local lake and promised himself a hot chocolate at the end of his foraging. He let go of his overwhelm and the things he couldn't control, connected to nature, exercised and did something he loved. He ended up having several connected experiences at the market and even spoke a lot of German. A man even jumped out of his car while they were queuing at a traffic light to tell Andrew how smart he was to have a tow bar on his cabriolet!' It's from this Adult place that you can develop self-awareness, which then gives you choices.

> YOUR TURN: *Take a moment to consider how you can resource yourself and what you can do to put yourself into your Adult ego state. Think of a recent example of when you were grounded, in flow, in your healthy Adult. What did it feel like? How could you work on doing this more often?*

We humans are not consistent. We tend to move from one state to the next without even realising it. However, with awareness and self-knowledge we can understand why we're experiencing a trigger, then pause and choose how we respond to it. Transactional analysis expert Rosemary Napper, author of *Tactics* and director of TAWorks, told Eudora: 'It's only from our Adult that we're able to lead. We need to inhabit our Adult to learn, stay present, become self-aware and discover who we are as a leader. It's here that our passion can be awakened, and we find our individual style of leading. To lead, you need to know your unique purpose, which can only be discovered from the Adult ego state.'

6. Inflated and deflated ego

Now we can dive deeper into the ego and divide it into two types: the inflated ego and the deflated ego. Instead of seeing ourselves exactly as we are, we can either inflate how we see ourselves, for example thinking we're the cleverest person in the room; or we can see ourselves as deflated, a lesser version of who we really are. Perhaps we have an inner critic that says: 'You're a waste of space. No one would notice if you weren't here.' We can find ourselves imagining that we have no purpose, that we are invisible. We all have an inflated and a deflated ego, but one tends to be more dominant than the other. Eudora tells the story of her inflated ego, which she sees as Wonder Woman, ready to save the world at any moment.

'One of the most memorable days of my working life was 7 July 2005, the day of the London bombings. I was locking up my bike when I heard a loud pop. It was only when I heard the news and saw

a lot of people standing near my office building looking lost that I started to realise what was going on. All the roads were blocked and there was no mobile phone signal. I didn't realise at the time how close I had come to being caught up in the bus explosion as I cycled to work. It was clear to me that I needed to persuade senior staff to stop working and open the building to the thousands of people who had become stranded. We opened the doors, offered free tea and coffee to everyone as well as free use of our landlines so that people could contact their loved ones and tell them they were safe. That day I really did feel like a superhero. My inflated ego was able to jump into action and make a real difference to many people's lives.'

In the right context, such as this one, the inflated ego can be powerful and useful. However, it can also come out when it's not needed and make situations worse. For example, you could help an old woman across the street without asking her if she actually wanted to cross the street. The same goes for our deflated ego. It can help us stay grounded and reflective, but also lead us into believing that we're not OK.

7. I'm OK, you're OK

Eudora grew up in an environment that she found frightening and at times terrifying. 'I never knew, from one minute to the next, how my mother would react to me. Would she respond with anger or with love? I developed patterns of behaviour that helped me cope in this unpredictable situation.' As a result, she learnt how to read other people and situations. For example, she was able to read her mother's mood by her body language and tone of voice. Growing up, she tried everything to gain her love, to make her OK. Eric Berne talks about everyone being born good, or OK, and that our individual life experiences teach us to see the world as a series of interactions between OK and not OK. Psychiatrist Frank Ernst developed this premise into the OK Corral, which looks at

interactions between you and another person. In all interactions with another person, one of four dynamics take place:

1. **I'm OK, you're not OK:** In this position the person feels superior to others. They may be contemptuous and quick to anger. Parents and managers can find themselves in this position. They try to be perfect and tend to respond with 'fight' behaviours.
2. **I'm not OK, you're OK:** In this position the person feels inferior to others. They tend to have low self-esteem and put others first. They try to please others and tend to respond with 'flight' behaviours.
3. **I'm not OK, you're not OK:** This position is rare. The person feels bad and also projects badness on the other. There's a sense of betrayal and retribution in this dynamic. They tend to respond with 'freeze' behaviours.
4. **I'm OK, you're OK:** This is the ideal position with a sense of comfort and ease apparent in any interactions. These are happy, confident people who get on with others even if there's a difference of opinion. They tend to respond with authentic behaviours and come across as being in flow.

Parenting and family systems educator Jean Illsley Clarke developed this model further. When we're leading from the 'I'm OK, you're OK' quadrant, we can experience flow, a win–win dynamic and can be authentically ourselves. In the other quadrants we experience the anxiety responses of flight, freeze and fight and enter a lose–win, lose–lose or win–lose dynamic. As Rosemary Napper told Eudora: 'Our experiences of bad leaders prove more helpful. It's through the difficult experiences that we discover the good leader in us. An Authentic Leader invites us to join them in the Adult ego state. An Authentic Leader is always learning, growing and maximising the potential in their team.' She also asks the question:

what does OK-ness mean to you? For Rosemary, it's this: 'Respect and value. So, I respect and value myself, and I respect and value you as a human being, even though I might not appreciate your behaviour or agree with your ideas.'

> YOUR TURN: *In your journal, write down what OK-ness means to you – both in how you relate to yourself and how you relate to others.*

8. Growing into 'I'm OK, you're OK'

Eudora's early childhood experience was one of 'I'm not OK, you're not OK'. She remembers: 'I tried everything to make my mother OK so that she would love me and care for me. When my mother was angry at me, I would freeze. I remember thinking that if I crossed all my fingers behind my back, then everything would be OK. It wasn't. I spent a lot of my early childhood feeling frozen and scared.' She went to a Quaker boarding school from the age of 10 and developed a number of positive parental relationships with teachers and boarding house staff, and was surprised that they took the trouble to listen to her and take her seriously. 'My relationship with my mother worsened as I became a teenager. I moved into a dynamic of 'I'm not OK, you're OK' and realised that if I didn't want to disappear and have my soul die, I needed to leave. I went into flight mode.' As a result, she has an overdeveloped ability to read others, to ensure that they are OK, but: 'I'm not very good at looking at my own needs and making myself OK. It has taken me many years and a lot of self-development to move from the dynamic of 'I'm not OK, you're OK' where I'm in constant flight mode to one of 'I'm OK, you're OK', where life is in flow.'

A word about self-leadership

A heartful business needs to have an 'I'm OK, you're OK' culture; in other words an authentic, win–win attitude, if it is to thrive

and develop. Self-leadership was the way we chose to develop this culture at Thornton's Budgens. While the story of how this unfolded is told in Chapter 7, for now I'll define self-leadership as 'becoming an expert on yourself through a commitment to honest self-reflection and the ongoing process of learning and growing from your experiences'. It's a powerful way to start your journey towards becoming an Authentic Leader.

Coaching played a huge role in our self-leadership work at Thornton's Budgens. It's a tool that can help people grow and develop. In the early days, we trained four internal coaches. One of them ran an in-flow exercise with Seelan, our produce (fruit and veg) manager. He said that he was very good at and loved being creative, especially with in-store displays. When asked by his coach why he hadn't acted on this yet, Seelan recalled having built a display earlier in his career and being told by the store manager that it was rubbish. He immediately put the idea of bringing his creativity to work into the category of 'something it's not safe to do', and it became a core wound. Encouraged by his coach, Seelan started to build some small tomato displays at the entrance to the store. Having had great feedback from me and others, he built larger displays until the tomato displays at Thornton's Budgens became famous! Local people even took photos of their new-born babies next to our tomatoes and posted them on Facebook. As a result, our tomato sales increased, as did our total produce sales. Seelan also grew in confidence and became much more engaged with customers and his colleagues. Inspired by his approach, others started to build their own displays. That's quite an amazing set of outcomes from one coaching session!

Here are a couple of the lessons we learnt about coaching:

1. Use of external coaches can be pivotal, both at the kick-off stage and when you want to make a big shift in behaviour. For example, we used a group of Human Potential coaches (see Chapter 7) to work with the team

as part of the transition from command and control to self-leadership.

2. In the long term, it's important to train up internal coaches. At Thornton's Budgens, that evolved into a coaching style of leadership, with ad hoc (external) coaching available for people who needed additional support. We found having internal coaches led to increased ownership of the work culture and an increase in psychological safety.

However, coaching must be voluntary. You can't force people to open their hearts; it has to come naturally. Despite knowing this, at one point I tried to impose coaching on the whole self-leadership team. Needless to say, I received pushback from those who didn't want to be coached at that time. Eudora has found that for those who are more resistant to being coached, using their Human Potential Assessment (see Chapter 7) as a starting point and inviting them to choose a dimension to look at provides a gentler approach than coaching. She also found that an internal coach can be better received and seen more as a motivational cheerleader for people who are resistant to coaching.

Eudora noticed a change at Thornton's Budgens as a result of the coaching: 'As more and more team members were coached and discovered that they were welcome to bring all of themselves to work, the internal culture changed. The traditional cultural divisions along national and faith lines started to fade and a merging took place. Individuals felt empowered to trust themselves to make decisions without asking permission, and a culture of communicating ideas and appreciation started to flourish. The staff became a team, individuals felt safe to be themselves at work and creativity flowed.'

As you'll see in the interview that follows, Kate experienced positive changes at home as well as at work as a result of the coaching she received, which in turn made her a more effective team member.

Thornton's Budgens team interview #2

Name: Kate Avgarska
Nationality: Bulgarian
Position: Co-leader
Length of service: Nine years, plus 12 with another Budgens store and at head office

The changes that have occurred because of the coaching at Thornton's Budgens were not initially obvious to the outside world. They were gradual and took at least 12 months to become noticeable. I've certainly become more aware of my own emotions as well as those of my co-workers. I've become a better team leader and listener. Before the coaching, I didn't show my daughters what was going on for me. Now I allow them to see my emotions. The coaching has brought me closer to my daughters; we have more appreciation for each other now.

I've also learnt to remain calm, to step back from a situation and evaluate it before I respond. Last year I experienced a few challenging situations at work and noticed that I was able to respond differently. I was able to trust my instincts and stand by my decisions. I'm much more approachable now and aware of my impact on others. Now, when I'm faced with a co-worker who has a different opinion to me, we are able to voice our differences and explore solutions together instead of arguing.

The biggest challenge for me has been showing my vulnerability. My old behaviour pattern was to ignore my surroundings and just react. Today things are different;

there is now a culture of fairness. We are the Thornton's Budgens team, and we trust each other. We've known each other for a long time now and this increase in trust has brought us closer together. It moves situations on so that we can get more done.

Thornton's Budgens has moved to a new level of self-leadership. We're all moving towards the same goal, together. We give each other space to express our emotions, without making judgements. There's no fear of the consequences and we can openly offer each other emotional support. I feel more balanced and in harmony with myself. I can clearly see the achievements of the past two years. I've gone through some very big personal and professional changes. Covid has been a challenge, but it has made us stronger, together.