PART I

YOUR LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

When working with leaders, George often tells the story of the first time he was physically taken hostage:

In the mid-sixties, I had just come out of graduate school and started working as a psychologist accompanying police on domestic violence cases. One night, I was riding with Dan, a lieutenant, when a call came through of a possible hostage situation at a nearby hospital. We rushed into the emergency room where we learned that a patient being treated for a stab wound had taken a nurse, Sheila, hostage. In a psychotic state, he was shouting and screaming.

Dan quickly assessed the situation and realized that since we were in the emergency room it was not possible to use tear gas or rush through the door. He decided that the best option was to have someone go calmly into the room and try to talk to the man.

With all the doctors, nurses and police officers standing around, I felt pretty safe that that "someone" would not be me, the "new guy." Dan looked around the room once, then twice, and then he turned to me and asked, "George, how would you like to do it?" I said, "Sure, why not."

3

I entered the room to find the patient, a man named Sam, holding a pair of scissors to Sheila's throat. I began by asking questions: "What do you need, Sam?" "What do you want?" "How can we help you right now?" After a few minutes of screaming and yelling, he cut the skin on Sheila's throat. Sam then started across the room. As he charged forward pointing the scissors at my throat, he kept screaming, "I'm going to kill you and everybody I can!" I kept calm, put my hands onto his arms and, looking into his eyes, asked more questions. I knew from the briefing that his ex-wife had stabbed him, injuring him severely, during an argument over the custody of their children. Focusing his mind onto what was important to him, I asked, "What about your children, Sam?"

"Don't talk about my children. Bring them here and I will kill them too," he answered.

Now, while not the response I wanted, his answer was a concession—a positive step because it was the first time Sam had responded to one of my questions.

"Do you want them to remember you as a murderer?"

Then there was a pause during which Sam's energy changed. I had found a way to connect with him.

"We have to talk about your kids. How do you want them to remember you?"

We carried on talking and he calmed down enough for me to negotiate for Sheila's release. A few minutes later, I asked him, "Do you still need the scissors? Would you throw them on the floor or hand them to me?" Given this choice, he hesitated and then gave me the scissors—a sign that he trusted me enough to give up his weapon.

I pointed out that we needed to continue his medical treatment. Since it was necessary to handcuff him, I asked, "Would you like me to handcuff you, or shall I ask the police

to do it?" "Would you like to be handcuffed in the front or back?" He answered, "George, I would like you to do it and I want to be handcuffed in the front." So I did, and we slowly walked out of the room.

As he was being led away, Sam said, "George, you're all right. I am glad I didn't kill you." I replied, "Me too, Sam." He then thanked me sincerely. I asked him what he was thanking me for and he said, "For reminding me how important my children are to me."

After he was taken away, I held it together long enough to ask Dan to step away from the group of people. I then experienced a wave of powerful, overwhelming emotions. I shouted at Dan, "How dare you send me into that room! I could have been killed!"

"But George, you were the right person. I've been watching you and I knew you were ready to deal with a situation like this. I knew you could do it."

I've since been physically taken hostage three additional times, and I've diffused hundreds of potentially violent situations. Now, more than 40 years later, when I'm in a challenging situation, I can still hear Dan's voice saying, "I knew you could do it," and I am once again inspired.

Dan saw a potential in George that George could not see in himself. Recalls George, "He didn't treat me as a junior or a trainee; he treated me like all other members of the team. In a high-stakes situation, Dan decided that I was capable and I was the right person. He offered me the opportunity to stretch myself."

In a tense moment, Dan remained calm in his general behavior, exhibiting confidence in his team. Instead of panicking or raising his voice, he simply and calmly asked, "George, how would you like to do it?"

After the hostage situation was resolved, he responded to George's outburst with a single statement: "But George, you were the right person" which brought George back to the fact that he had been successful.

Let's look also at the keys to George's success in this harrowing situation. He, too, remained calm. He developed an empathetic understanding of Sam's motivation; by the end, Sam even felt bonded to George. George tapped into Sam's potential and possibility by bringing up the subject of his children instead of focusing on the negative aspects of the future (including certain prison). He asked questions and gave options, thereby granting human dignity and choice to the very man who held scissors to his neck.

In this anecdote, the real interest lies in the fact that Dan "led" George in essentially the same way George "led" Sam. They were both, to be precise, a "secure base"—Dan for George and George for Sam. They each provided a sense of protection and comfort from which another person received energy and inspiration to explore, take risks and seek challenge.

Dan and George are not unique. Great leaders all over the world unleash astonishing potential within themselves, their people and their organizations by building the trust, delivering the change and inspiring the focus that together underpin engagement and create the conditions for innovation. They achieve sustainable high performance simply by tapping into their own secure bases and becoming a secure base for other people. We define high performance as:

challenging yourself and others to see and achieve what is beyond normal expectation.

In this place, you push beyond your comfort zone and do what you thought was impossible. You move to the very edge of risk and possibility.

You, too, can become a Secure Base Leader in your work and your life. No matter where you work and with whom you work, how little support you feel, how small your budget, or how busy

you are, you can learn specific skills and develop a way of being and doing that delivers sustainable results through inspired relationships. You can learn to care to dare.

If you are like many executives we meet, you may have been "taken hostage" by a boss, a team, an employee, a customer, a situation or by the pressure to achieve results in the form of numbers, targets or key performance indicators. In other words, you may feel powerless and unable to escape these constraints. In the pursuit of financial success, you may even have lost sight of the importance of relationships and how they impact real and sustainable success. Secure Base Leadership, based on trust, confidence and challenge, is the best way to liberate yourself, your team and your organization from being held hostage.

Although extremely deep and powerful, Secure Base Leadership does not take years to learn. In fact, the keys to developing as a Secure Base Leader are already within you: within your life story, within your experience and within the way you have internalized successes and failures. Through our research, we identified the nine characteristics of a Secure Base Leader, and over the course of this book, you'll learn how to develop these characteristics in yourself. We'll answer these questions:

- Why should you be a Secure Base Leader?
- How do you provide care, safety and comfort?[1]
- How do you provide daring, challenge and risk?
- How do you put these ideas into action right away? In other words, what do you do next Monday morning at work?

WHAT IS A SECURE BASE?

Let's start by going back to the beginning. Your beginning.

Your first secure base was likely your mother, your father, a grandparent or another significant caregiver. Your relationships with these people are fundamental to understanding yourself as an adult and as a leader.

The term secure base arose from the post-war attachment theory research of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.[2] Attachment theory revolves around the basic premise that all humans have an innate desire to seek closeness to and comfort from a person who gives them a sense of protection. In the post-World War II period, the United Nations hired Bowlby to find out why babies in "sterile" hospitals died of infection while those surrounded by disease often lived. He determined that mother-excluding protocols and severe nursing styles in the sterile hospitals often deprived babies of attention and loving care. On the other hand, babies who had access to their mothers or sensitive caregivers tended to survive the diseases around them. He concluded that a bond gave the babies resilience and strength.

Following Bowlby's work, researcher J.W. Anderson noticed how children would explore but always keep their mothers as a base—a *secure* base. Toddlers would play around the area but from time to time return to the mother for some form of comfort. It was intriguing that different children appeared to behave differently. Some would stay very close to their mothers, afraid to take a risk, while others would explore the outer edges of the play area while paying very little attention to their mothers. What was common, however, was that when frightened or upset all children turned to their mothers, who demonstrated two sets of behaviors. On the one hand, their behaviors of acceptance and being accessible indicated a provision of safety, while on the other hand, their behaviors of providing opportunities for risk empowered the children to discover their own solutions and to pursue their autonomy.[3]

Building on this concept, for the purposes of our work in modern organizations, we define a secure base as:

a person, place, goal or object that provides a sense of protection, safety and caring *and* offers a source of inspiration and energy for daring, exploration, risk taking and seeking challenge.

Note that to our way of thinking a secure base is someone or something that inspires or brings forth energy within an individual. With this inspiration and energy, individuals step out of their comfort zones and strive to fulfill their untapped potential.

To understand why we all need secure bases, consider how the human brain works. When an actual or perceived threat to survival emerges, the primal brain will prompt the individual to resist change or avoid risk to protect the self. However, when a person has a secure base, he can turn the focus from pain, danger, fear and loss to focus on reward, opportunity and benefit.

While the strongest secure bases often take the form of people, secure bases can also be anything that shuts down the early warning system in the brain and provides the energy and inspiration to seek challenge. In our view, places, goals and objects can be secure bases, as can a country, a religion or God, an event, a group, or even a pet. Any entity that through a relationship enhances the person's inner sense of safety and inspires exploration can be a secure base. The stronger the secure base, the more resilient the person becomes in the face of adverse or stressful circumstances. Because the need for a secure base is rooted deep within the brain, the secure base concept applies universally across all cultures and generations.

Multifaceted, the concept of a secure base presents paradox after paradox and layer after layer. A secure base provides protection and encourages risk taking. A secure base both waits and intervenes. People need both people and goals as secure bases. You can only be a secure base for others when you have multiple secure bases yourself. Let's explore these dynamics in more detail.

THE SAFETY/RISK PARADOX

Figure 1.1 shows the interplay between the two primary dimensions of being a secure base: safety and risk. The safety is reflected in caring, while the risk is reflected in daring. A secure base provides the safety, security and comfort that enable exploration and risk taking. A secure base simultaneously shuts down the brain's

Figure 1.1   The Safety/Risk Paradox
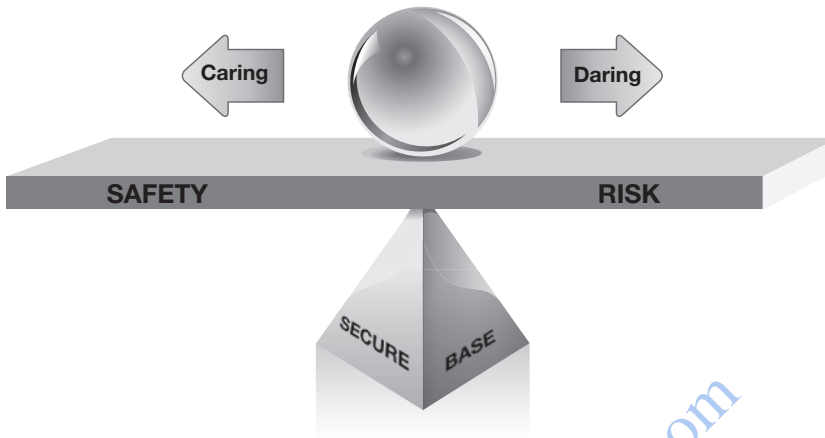
focus on fear, threat and even survival *and* encourages curiosity and risk taking while inspiring exploration. In this way, a secure base brings out the inherent potential in the individual.

If you only provided safety, you would be a source of great comfort for the other person; however, without inspiring him to explore, take risks or seek challenge, you would actually overprotect him and limit his potential. On the other hand, if you encouraged risk without providing safety and security, you would be demanding exploration without giving the support necessary for the person to gain confidence in that risk taking. In that situation, he is likely to feel overexposed and vulnerable and then resort to defensiveness as an instinctive reaction to feeling unsafe. Providing only one side of the equation reduces the ultimate performance of the people you want to lead—either because they are too comfortable or because they are too anxious.

As we conducted our research on high performance leaders, we heard these two stories that demonstrate how childhood secure bases who balance safety and risk have an enormous and lasting impact:

Andrea's German and biology teacher had high expectations and was very results-oriented; at the same time, the personal development of his pupils was close to his heart. She recalls, "He encouraged us to go beyond thinking in 'black and white' or 'right and wrong' categories; he very much encouraged us to look out for 'grey zones' and to consider them as well. He triggered critical as well as creative thinking and clearly pointed us to personal responsibility and accountability. My teacher was an authentic, respectful person and was very passionate about what he did. His way of acting and approach to life highly motivated me and enabled me to achieve more than I would have ever believed to be possible."

Gudrun recalled a time when she was only four or five and her family went skiing in Switzerland. It was snowing and cloudy but her father took her up to the Stockhorn, a rather difficult skiing area, and skied down with her. On their return, her mother was upset and said, "This is madness. She is just a small child and it is very dangerous." Her father replied, "Yes, and she did very well. There was no problem." Gudrun recalled that she had felt absolutely secure when skiing through the snowfall and remembered the pride she felt about how she had skied that day and about how her father had believed in her.

Andrea's teacher clearly cared for her and dared her to achieve high performance. Likewise, Gudrun's father provided an extraordinary example of how the power of presence, the depth of relationship and the impact of words can influence a person's thinking. Today, Gudrun still remembers her father's voice saying, "She did very well." Who did she choose to listen to? In this case, she paid attention to the words of her father rather than the anxiety of her mother.

Gudrun seemed quite happy with her father that day. Sometimes you may not actually appreciate your secure base at the time he or she pushes you. Think of those times you "hated" your

parents for "making" you challenge yourself. Think of that teacher who gave you extra work because she knew you could do better. Secure bases push you out of your comfort zone. On the other hand, a friend you love may not be a secure base at all if she doesn't challenge you to explore and take appropriate risks.

A WAITING GAME

Bowlby made it clear that a secure base should intervene only when required or requested, not proactively. As he said, "It is largely a waiting game."[4] In our frame of reference, it is about being available and on standby. That's why even a very "busy" person can act as a secure base to many people. A secure base is a good listener who picks up on signals (whether verbal or non-verbal) and pays close attention to the needs of the other person, rather than imposing solutions too quickly. Also, instead of advocating a position, a secure base applies the judicious use of questions to challenge thinking.

Secure bases do not think for other people. They don't "rescue" them. They don't do what the person can clearly do herself. A secure base lets the person do something herself and then helps her to make meaning of the experience.

PEOPLE AND GOALS

Figure 1.2 captures another dimension of secure bases: the combination of attaching to both people and goals. Bonding to people is pretty obvious. People need interpersonal attachments to feel worthwhile, to deserve to exist and to feel loved.

"Bonding to goals" is less obvious. To do so, set a target or goal for yourself and then commit to the steps needed to achieve that goal. Here are some examples that show bonding to goals:

• Jacob aimed for the goal of becoming an excellent presenter. He achieved it at his company annual event after 18 months of practice.

FIGURE 1.2 THE STRENGTH OF A SECURE BASE
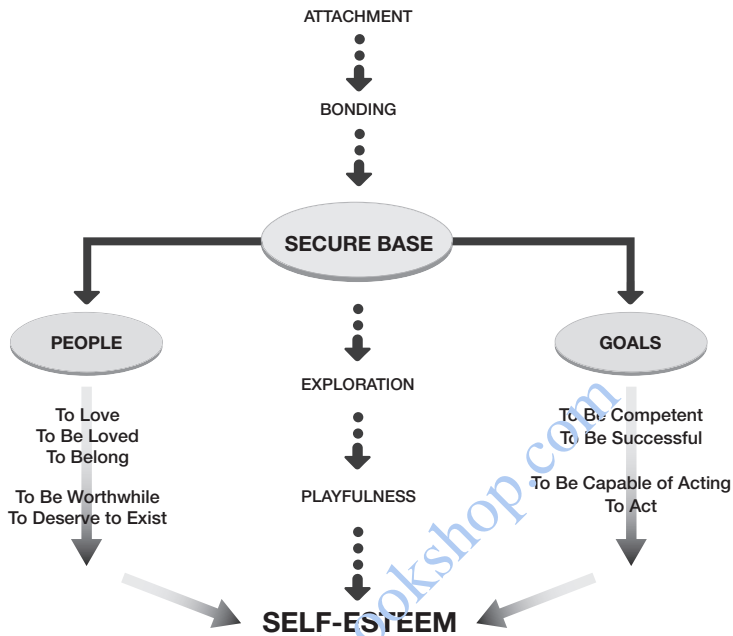
- Andreas set himself the goal of becoming a better leader, as measured by a pre- and post-360° feedback survey. By creating a plan and putting in place clear actions, he was able to improve his leadership skills over a 12-month period.
- Kathleen set herself a goal of becoming a Chief Technology Officer by age 45. She achieved this goal at age 43 by changing companies.
- As a team of co-authors, George, Susan and Duncan have been bonded to the shared goal of completing this book.

People simply must be bonded to goals in order to feel capable of acting, to achieve and to have success. Bonding to goals provides the determination and resilience to overcome obstacles and

achieve results. The very act of bonding to a goal brings energy to the pursuit.

If you have people as secure bases but not goals, you may feel very secure but you may play it too safe and not take the risks necessary to maximize your potential. You may feel loved but not successful. If you have goals as secure bases but not people, you often will experience considerable material success but be quite impoverished in terms of love and bonding to people. Some apparent external successes are truly personal failures because of the hidden costs of high stress and potential burnout. Secure Base Leaders prevent these failures.

People who have only goals as secure bases can become what are called "independent loners." When they lack bonds to people like Pascal in this story, they may suffer from illness, addiction, depression and chronic loneliness:

Pascal, a senior leader with a scientific background, grew up with a lack of bonding to both his mother and his father, who was physically and emotionally abusive. He managed to be very successful in his career but at a great cost. He always focused on numbers at the exclusion of people. Shortly after marrying a woman he loved deeply, Pascal had a major emotional reaction provoked by feelings of rejection and jealousy, and he physically attacked his wife. Shocked by his own behavior, he sought medical help and was put on medication for a decade. He felt that there was something fundamentally wrong with him and he could not trust himself. This affected his leadership style as he did not trust anyone else, either. Employees liked his sense of humor but were unable to bond with him as a leader.

Once Pascal was able to grieve for what he had missed with his own parents, he was able to understand that he was a highly independent loner filled with pain. He could then forgive himself and fully re-bond with his wife. As with all

resolved grief, Pascal's process ended with a feeling of gratitude. His inner peace dramatically improved his leadership. For the first time he was able to create authentic relationships with his colleagues, peers and boss—and thereby move into outstanding high performance.

This story highlights the difference between high performance and *sustained* high performance. Many leaders carry wounds with them from their past that affect their leadership without their conscious knowledge. To move on effectively, Pascal needed to stop being a hostage to his past, get over the event that occurred with his wife, and forgive his parents for not being secure bases for him.

Keeping the balance between bonding to people and bonding to goals is fundamental for healthy functioning, high self-esteem, and high performance at work. When you lack attachment to people or to goals, you may develop a fear of rejection, a fear of success, or a fear of failure that stops you from reaching your full potential. Extremely powerful fear stops people from reaching for stretch goals because they feel inadequate. Secure bases help them focus on potential success, protect them from their insecurity and inspire the courage to act.

Ask yourself:

- How bonded am I to both people and goals? Do I have the right balance?

TO BE A SECURE BASE, YOU NEED SECURE BASES

It is important both to *have* secure bases and to *be* a secure base for others. We learn through imitation and modeling. If you have experienced the power of a secure base in your life, you are then able to use it as a "model" of how to be a secure base for others.

Ideally, you will have multiple secure bases that change depending on your stage in life and your need. It is never too late to find secure bases for yourself. Likewise, it is never too late to learn how to be a secure base for others. You learn from the caretaking roles in your life: looking after a pet, being in love, becoming a parent or becoming a leader who cares.

SECURE BASES AND MINDSET

Secure bases play a very active role not only in how people learn skills but also in how they make meaning of the world. The secure bases in our lives, from childhood to present day, influence what we believe.[5] The secure bases we choose shape the mind, which in turn shapes focus, which in turn shapes result. In this book, we focus on the forces that have influenced your thinking and mindset. We undertook research that involved extensive interviews with global leaders and quantitative surveys with more than 1,000 executives (see "About the Research" section in the Appendix). By asking leaders about their own motivation, we discovered the factors that shaped the beliefs they hold about themselves. Their answers related to their own self-beliefs. However, when asked about who or what influenced the way these beliefs were formed, executives often experienced a kind of "a-ha moment" as they realized their thinking had been unconsciously influenced by significant people, events or experiences in their past or current lives.

Everyone holds both empowering and limiting beliefs. Some people focus more on the empowering beliefs while others focus more on the limiting beliefs that stop them from acting and succeeding. We all have a story of a teacher who encouraged us to achieve great things as well as a story of a teacher who poisoned our minds into believing that we had no talent in a particular field or area. This story describes Jack's choice of focus:

When Jack was 17 and working hard for his final IB exams, he received a history paper back from his teacher with the

words, "I don't know why I bother" scrawled across the end. With his family as a secure base, rather than be distracted by the negative words, Jack decided to prove the teacher wrong and achieved much higher grades than predicted in his final exams.

The important point to remember is that you have a choice about whether you accept or reject someone else's views or opinions. You do not have to be held hostage by others' words or deeds. You choose whether someone is going to influence you positively or negatively. We now understand that the way we react to influences is so individual that it is impossible for any two people to have the same behavior, even if they grew up in the same family and the same environment. What means something to one person may mean something altogether different to another.

Ask yourself:

• Who are the people who have influenced the beliefs I hold about my own abilities and those of others?

SECURE BASE LEADERSHIP

In choosing to be a Secure Base Leader, you step into a deeply influential position that contributes to the "making" of a man or woman. Although deeply ingrained, other people's self-beliefs can be influenced and, more precisely, they can be influenced by you. You choose whether your influence is going to be positive or negative.

In the words of leadership guru Warren Bennis, "The basis of leadership is the capacity of the leader to change the mindset, the framework of another person."[6]

This is a delicate point to understand: the interplay between inherited characteristics, outside influences and choice. You do not

become a great leader by yourself. You become a great leader in part through the influence of your secure bases. In short, you stand on the shoulders of those people who have influenced you. You act as a great leader when you use *your* influence to unleash the positive potential of the people who follow you, in other words when you choose to be a Secure Base Leader and you let others stand on *your* shoulders.
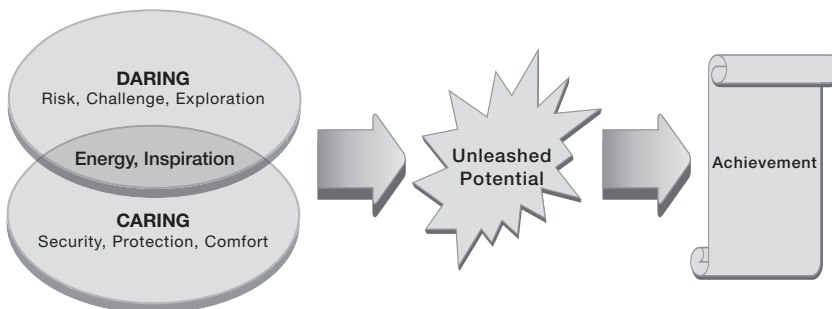
We define Secure Base Leadership as:

the way a leader builds trust and influences others by providing a sense of protection, safety and caring *and* by providing a source of inspiration that together produce energy for daring, exploration, risk taking and seeking challenge.

Figure 1.3 demonstrates how Secure Base Leadership unleashes potential and results in achievement.

Leadership is all about inspiring and harnessing energy. You harness your energy to mobilize individuals, teams and organizations to use their energy in the service of a goal or mission you articulate. In the process, you and your followers achieve more than you ever thought possible.

Managers have direct reports. Leaders have followers. Through their followers, leaders are able to achieve outstanding results.

FIGURE 1.3   SECURE BASE LEADERSHIP

Secure Base Leadership emphasizes both the relational nature of leadership (people) and the operational aspect of getting work done in a positive manner. It certainly involves how you deal with decision-making, issues, situations and problems. However, it is more than just driving numbers. It is about how you inspire people. By articulating inspiring goals that can themselves become secure bases for your people, you will realize success in terms of results. We know you have to deliver results, and through Secure Base Leadership, you will. By focusing on people, you can inspire and engage others to achieve more than they ever thought possible.

> **MYTH: Your personal life has nothing to do with your leadership effectiveness.**
>
> Not true. Your personal journey defines who you are as a leader. You bring both inspiration and limitations from your personal life into work. You manifest your very humanity in your leadership.

The combination of people and goals as secure bases allows a person to trust, be creative, take risks, explore and be playful. When we ask people about how they describe being on a high performing team, they often say it was intense but also a lot of fun. In other words, they experienced a tight connection to both goals and people.

What we hear on the ground mirrors the findings of leadership and organizational researchers Micha Popper and Ofra Mayseless. They suggest that "the leader's provision of a sense of security makes possible the activation of other behavioral systems such as exploration. This might be manifested in the capacity of followers to take risks and be creative, leading to learning and personal growth."[7] They further suggest that the opposite would also be true. If the followers feel insecure as a result of the leader's behavior, then risk taking, exploration and learning will diminish.

Continuing this line of thought, they propose that the leader who is a secure base will help followers develop new mental models as well as achieve greater "self-confidence, autonomy, competence, self-efficacy and self-esteem."[8]

When Leaders Fail

Leaders fail when they:

- Do not inspire others
- Lack awareness of the impact they are having on other people
- Neglect relationships in the relentless pursuit of goals
- Do not manage themselves and their emotions

Even icons like Steve Jobs failed at some point in their careers. Walter Issacson, author of the tech giant's authorized biography, told the story of Jobs' firing at Apple. Book reviewer Lev Grossman provides this summary:

Nine years after Jobs founded Apple, he was driven out of the company, and Isaacson makes it clear that he gave his colleagues no choice: his obsession with control, his tirades and crying jags, his inflexibility in the face of a changing market and his reluctance to bathe all made him a toxic presence.[9]

At that point in his career, Jobs definitely did not lead as a secure base. However, Grossman continues with:

But he returned in triumph in 1996 a changed man, with enough control over his demons to save Apple and build it into the world's most valuable company.

Jobs' story stands as an example of why leaders fail as well as an inspiration for those who need courage to become self-aware and change in pursuit of leadership greatness.

Through the executives attending our workshops around the world we see firsthand how secure bases are an important foundation of leadership. Your personal journey defines who you are as a leader. For that reason, much of your work to become a Secure Base Leader will involve becoming aware of the people, events and experiences that have influenced you. That is why we will take you back to your personal life throughout this book and provide specific guidance and exercises to help you reflect upon the people, events and experiences that have shaped your thinking and impacted your leadership.

Your Leadership Successes and Failures

One way to reflect upon your leadership performance patterns is to write up three success stories and three failure stories from your life. They can be personal or professional, from your childhood, adolescence or adulthood. Write with as much or as little detail as you would like.

Read through the stories and notice what aspects appeared in each of the success stories and what was absent from the failure stories. For example, did your success stories all involve working with others while your failures reflected times you worked alone? Or did your successes have a supportive authority figure in common? Was such a figure lacking in your failure stories?

By examining the factors behind your successes and seeing the absence of those factors in your failures, you can identify the patterns or themes that are most important for success, not only at work but also in your personal life.

BELAY YOUR PEOPLE: THE COMPONENTS OF SECURE BASE LEADERSHIP

You demonstrate Secure Base Leadership when you combine comfort and risk, support and stretch, protection and challenge—when you bond with your people and focus them, the team or the organization on stretch targets. It is a dynamic balancing act between providing safety through bonding and encouraging risk through a focus on possibility.

In many ways, being a Secure Base Leader is like "belaying" a rock climber. Although different manifestations of this safety system exist on different rock faces or indoor climbing walls, the basic concept remains the same. As illustrated in Figure 1.4, a rope

FIGURE 1.4   BELAYING AS METAPHOR FOR SECURE BASE LEADERSHIP
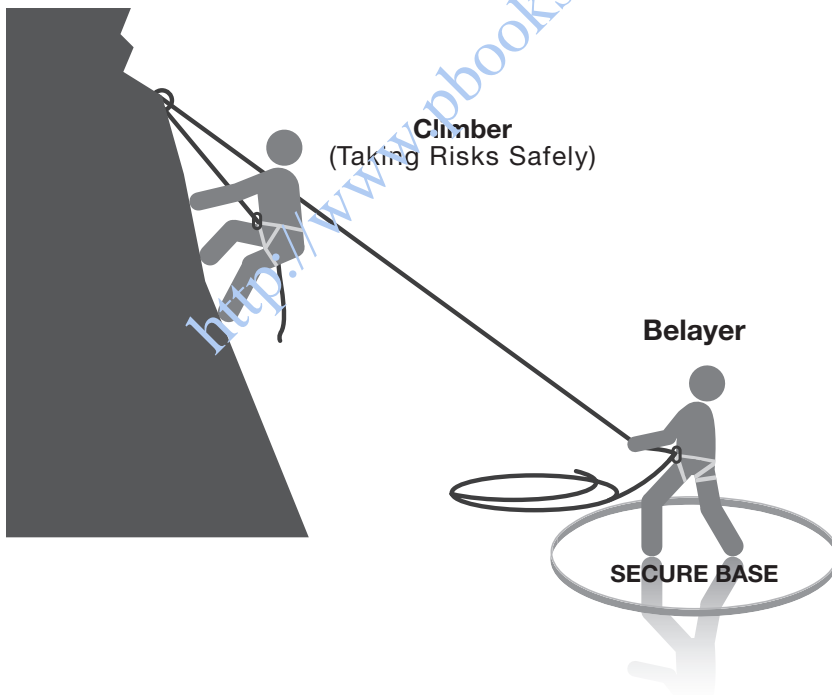
is looped through an anchor above the immediate climbing area. The climber is attached to one end of the rope. The belayer, using a special device clipped to his harness, holds the other side of the rope so that the climber has enough slack to move, but not enough to fall any great distance. As the climber advances up the mountain or wall, the belayer watches the climber intently and takes up slack as needed.

Essentially, the climber can take the risks inherent in the climb precisely *because* the belayer is providing the sense of safety. As we delve into the details of Secure Base Leadership, you'll see that we explore this metaphor in more detail because both the process and the presence of belaying reflect the nuances of Secure Base Leadership.

Clearly, encouraging someone to climb before you secure the belay would be irresponsible. Likewise, stretching someone through professional challenges before you have established a strong platform of safety can result in frustration and stress. Therefore, the first "step" of Secure Base Leadership is to develop that sense of safety and protection by "bonding." When you encourage stretch and challenge, you actually reinforce the bond of trust because you are saying "I believe that you can succeed. I trust you." The power of Secure Base Leadership is in this self-reinforcing dynamic.

Ask yourself:

- Would my people say I do a good job "belaying" them?

BONDING THAT DEVELOPS TRUST

Critical to Secure Base Leadership, bonding is:

> **forming an attachment that creates more physical, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual energy than the person or people involved could generate independently.**

Bonding is an emotional connection that is different from friendship. As you'll see in Chapter 3, Secure Base Leaders bond with their followers. Ultimately, that bonding results in trust—trust that the leader is acting with the best interest of the followers in mind, trust that the leader will support the followers should they falter or fail and trust that the leader knows the level of challenge that is appropriate. It is, quite simply, like having someone on belay.

All bonds start as "attachments" that are basic connections. An attachment progresses to a bond when there is an exchange of emotion and a depth of contact—a "chemistry," if you will. However, bonds are not permanent, nor should they be. "Separation" from a bond at the right time is natural, just as it is natural for a child to leave a parent. When leaders do not allow bonds to evolve, they inhibit the separation that comes with growth. In this case they hold their followers hostage. A Secure Base Leader encourages his people to move on and up, taking on bigger and greater challenges, and he watches with pride and with caring. In today's highly competitive world, bonding to people is the biggest challenge and a true test of a Secure Base Leader.

Embracing Loss to Deliver Change

"Grief" is a word one rarely hears within work settings, yet it is a natural part of life that is as relevant in the workplace as it is in personal life. Any time a person suffers a loss—the loss of a person through death, the loss of a bond with a colleague who was laid off, the loss of a team because of a reorganization—she can become resistant to "reattaching" and forming new bonds to people, goals or work. The only way to move on from the loss is through grief. Through the process of grieving, people come back to the joy of work, to the joy of parenting or even to the joy of life. They get over whatever was lost. They regain energy. At work, therefore, they return to full productivity.

People experience loss on a daily basis and in all transitions. In addition to the big losses in life, people can also grieve the loss of an office, the loss of a project, the loss of a client, the loss of a reserved parking spot or even the loss of a favorite pen. When you learn to embrace grief as a natural emotion rather than something to be avoided, you begin to be able to deal more effectively and more compassionately with any loss or change.

Organizations are constantly dealing with change, and even the best-handled changes create loss that necessitates grieving. As you will read in Chapter 4, Secure Base Leaders understand grief as a natural process. They manage change in a way that focuses on the benefit instead of the pain. Because they have created a bond of trust, they authentically create space for people to express their fears and vent their feelings of disappointment. At the end of the process, people reach a stage of forgiveness and gratitude, and they are ready to move on to new attachments and challenges.

DIRECTING THE MIND'S EYE TO PROVIDE FOCUS

From the foundation of a bond so strong that it allows for grieving and reattachment, Secure Base Leaders, like the belayer, encourage followers to explore, take risks and stretch. They do so by directing the focus of their followers toward possibilities. Just as your mindset was influenced by your secure bases, you, as a Secure Base Leader, can influence the mindset of others so that they focus on the positive, thereby creating empowering beliefs that help them achieve goals.

As you will discover in Chapter 5, the "Mind's Eye" is the part of the brain that manages our focus. The Mind's Eye directs the focus of a "flashlight" to shine on either the positive or the negative. You can choose to look at the negative, the pain, the danger and what is going wrong and thereby create limiting beliefs that can stop you from taking risks to achieve the results you want. Or you can choose to look at the benefit, the gain and what is going

right. Secure Base Leaders influence the way others make that choice. They ensure that the Mind's Eye of the individual or team is focused on the goal, the benefit, the desired results, the learning, the opportunity and the possibility.

ACHIEVING RESULTS BY "PLAYING TO WIN"

"Playing to Win," the subject of Chapter 6, is a leadership approach that combines a high level of caring and a high level of daring. When you "Play to Win", you value both relationships and challenge. You push toward benefits instead of being taken hostage by fear. Many people "Play Not to Lose" because they are controlled by fear and anxiety; they avoid taking risks in order to pursue benefits. Other people "Play to Dominate" by focusing too much on the result and disconnecting from the people around them or by being too much of what *Emotional Intelligence* author Dan Goleman calls "pacesetters." People cannot keep up with a leader like this.

A pacesetter can be positive in the short term with a highly motivated team. When a pacesetter learns to stay bonded to people while focusing on stretch goals, he can move toward the "Playing to Win" approach and become a Secure Base Leader. Together, leader and followers achieve the highest level of performance: the climber, knowing he is safe with the Secure Base Leader belaying him, takes risks and reaches farther to arrive at the top of the climb. "Playing to Win" is the leadership approach in which you lead at your best in a sustainable way and have your deepest impact on others and your organization.

SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE

If you are like most leaders, you are surrounded by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. You know the world is becoming increasingly more volatile, more uncertain, more complex and

more ambiguous. How do you achieve results across cultures in such a world? How do you sustain your organization's performance amid these challenges? Just as importantly, how do you sustain *your own* performance amid these challenges?

If you keep driving for results by squeezing every ounce of energy out of yourself and your people, you will burn out and also lose their best effort. Instead, you have to inspire energy in a way that does not deplete you. Your followers have the potential to go the distance with and for you. You simply have to unleash their astonishing potential.

As a Secure Base Leader, you drive bonding that builds relationships and trust. Trust-based relationships drive engagement.[10] Engagement promotes retention and loyalty, and it reduces cost and stress. Even more importantly, with your full belief in their potential, your followers will be inspired not only to achieve ambitious personal goals but also to fulfil the very mission of your organization. With your influence in their Mind's Eye, they will believe that anything is possible. When the going gets tough or when inevitable change brings about loss, this high level of engagement will buoy them up so that together you can deal with the complexity, uncertainty, volatility and ambiguity of today's world.

As a Secure Base Leader, you deliver sustainable results by inspiring others to perform at their very best, even in changing environments. You create conditions that bolster loyalty and engagement as well as creativity and discovery. You promote excellence, inspiration and high self-esteem. In the end, when you care to dare and embrace Secure Base Leadership, your organization is more likely to deliver sustainable high performance with outstanding results.

This performance can be achieved without a big price tag: Secure Base Leadership does not cost money. It also does not have to take a lot of your time. It is simply a way of using your time with people differently and, most importantly, tapping into a deeper part of yourself to connect with your followers at a deeper level.

Ask yourself:

- Am I a Secure Base Leader?
- Do I balance a focus on results with a focus on people?
- Do I provide a safe enough environment to allow people to take risks?
- Do I intervene too quickly or wait too long?

WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT WILL YOU DO ON MONDAY MORNING?

Part I of this book gives you an overview of Secure Base Leadership. After the introduction in this chapter, you will learn about the nine characteristics of Secure Base Leaders that we discovered in our research (Chapter 2). In Part II, you will explore the components of Secure Base Leadership—bonding (Chapter 3), grief (Chapter 4), Mind's Eye (Chapter 5) and Playing to Win (Chapter 6)—as well as gain tips to develop the characteristics most applicable to each of those components.

Just as tennis players become experts through deliberate practice and good coaching, you can become an expert Secure Base Leader. It will take practice and you will need to build awareness of the secure bases in your life. The process, as you'll discover in Part III, involves delving into your past and embracing your present. You will discover the "roots of your leadership," recognize the secure bases you have in your life and even learn about becoming your own secure base (Chapter 7). From there, you will read about becoming a secure base for others (Chapter 8) and transforming your own organization into a secure base (Chapter 9).

Although developing as a Secure Base Leader is a highly personal process, it is tangible and attainable. Understanding and then incorporating the nine characteristics into your daily leadership behavior will help you to create an environment where people feel safe and protected enough to step out of their comfort zones, take risks and seek challenge. By picking a few of these characteristics

to work on, you can improve your own performance as a Secure Base Leader and thereby improve the performance of your employees, your team and your organization.

As you will read in Chapter 10, Secure Base Leadership is fundamentally about humanizing your leadership and, by extension, your organization. It is all too easy in this world to forget about people, including yourself, and the universal needs we all have to be connected, to be inspired and to grow. When we go too fast in an effort to keep up with change, we can dehumanize challenge. It is our hope that this book gives you permission to return to your humanity and to keep the human dimension flourishing and thriving in your teams, organizations, families and, by extension, society.

Key Learnings

- A secure base provides safety, protection and comfort as well as the inspiration for exploration, risk taking and challenge.
- Your secure bases have influenced not only your leadership but also who you are and what you choose to focus on.
- Secure Base Leaders build the trust, deliver the change and provide the focus that together underpin engagement and lead to high performance.
- Secure Base Leaders form bonds, embrace loss through grief, focus the Mind's Eye on the positive and "Play to Win."
- Secure Base Leaders manage their own Mind's Eye to focus on the positive and the benefits, and they influence others to focus theirs in that direction too.
- A Secure Base Leader is like a belayer who provides security to a rock climber so that he can take risks and climb to the top of the mountain.
- Secure Base Leadership does not cost money. The only investment you make is the choice to use your time differently.
- Leadership is a set of learned behaviors. You can develop any of the nine characteristics and become a Secure Base Leader who unleashes personal and organizational potential.

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"Dream more than others think practical. Expect more than others think possible. Care more than others think wise."

–Howard Schultz
1953–
Chairman and CEO of Starbucks

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: This sounds like a lot to take in . . . is it really possible to learn all of this?

A: Take it one step at a time. This chapter gave an overview of the whole book. You now have the big picture. From here you will learn more about these concepts in each chapter, and you will get the chance to learn how to fully integrate the material.

Q: How is *Care to Dare* different from other leadership books I have read or from leadership theories I have heard about?

A: Caring and Daring together is what makes Secure Base Leadership different. It is "soft" and "hard" at the same time. Furthermore, the personal exploration you will do in this book will lead you to understand the reasons why you lead the way you do. Your leadership role is the tip of the iceberg of who you are as a person. This book aims to get deep beneath the surface level of your leadership behaviors to develop a new way of leadership "being" and "doing."