**The Contemplative Leader: A Conversation with Bill George**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vH6R6BVjnk&feature=player_embedded>

Authentic leaders have developed a keen inner focus. They know what’s going on inside of themselves. They’re in touch with the relationship between their [**emotions and their actions**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/self-regulation-star-leaders-secret-weapon-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card). Most importantly, they possess a meta awareness – an awareness of awareness itself.

Bill George, Senior Fellow at Harvard Business School and author of [***Discover Your True North***](http://discoveryourtruenorth.org/order-now/), has some interesting methodologies for helping leaders master their self-awareness. Here’s what he had to say about a practical technique to develop self-awareness in his [**recent conversation with Daniel Goleman**](https://morethansound.net/shop/leadership-a-master-class-authentic-leadership-with-bill-george-and-daniel-goleman/#.VifAsaSR-1N).

\*\*\*

**The Contemplative Leader**

When I introduce the concept of inner focus, some people view it as being egotistical. I think it’s just the opposite. Most business leaders I know are incredibly focused, but they’re focused on their business goals. Inside they’re a mess. Why? Because they don’t take time to get clarity about what it is they’re trying to do and who they are. You can’t be a good leader until you have a real [**depth of awareness of who you are**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-negotiate-yourself-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card) and what you’re about. Otherwise you’re just chasing your tail, so to speak.

All of us – not just leaders – are so outwardly oriented. We don’t truly know ourselves because we don’t spend any time on trying to know ourselves. We don’t take the time to examine why we react when X situation occurs. We just [**react according to our habits**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-aware-your-self-defeating-habits-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card). Business as usual.

People often ask me, how do I gain self-awareness? For me, maintaining an introspective or contemplative practice has been essential to my success. I’ve been a meditator since 1975. I try to sit for at least a few minutes a day, twice a day.

Before that, I was a wreck. I was just chasing everything – 25, 50 objectives all at once. I had no sense of clarity. And when I began to meditate, I gained a sense of what’s really important. I learned to separate the wheat from the chaff. And I come out of it with a sense of clarity. Here are the three or four things that I really need to go focus on.

But I also got a much deeper sense of what I’m about and who I am, as well as a sense of wellbeing and tranquility. Without that sense of wellbeing you can’t really be an effective, [**focused leader**](https://morethansound.net/shop/cultivating-focus-techniques-for-excellence/#.VifDrKSR-1M). You can’t feel good about yourself if you continue to let ghosts from the past chase you.

Now, you’re contemplative practice doesn’t have to be meditation. It could be prayer. It could be talking with a loved one in great depth. It could be going for a jog to clear your head. It could be taking a long walk. I happen to like meditation, but I’m not saying that’s the only way.

Gain more insights on authentic leadership from Bill George in [***Leadership: A Master Class Training Guide***](https://morethansound.net/shop/leadership-master-class-training-guide/#.VifE_qSR-1M) and [***The Executive Edge: An Insider’s Guide to Outstanding Leadership***](https://morethansound.net/shop/the-executive-edge/#.VifFJKSR-1M).

**Additional Reading**

[**Four Strategies to Renew Your Career Passion**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/four-strategies-renew-your-career-passion-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card)

[**How Leaders Build Trust**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-leaders-build-trust-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card)

[**Are You Aware of Your Self-Defeating Habits?**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-aware-your-self-defeating-habits-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card)

[**A Relaxed Mind is a Productive Mind**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/relaxed-mind-productive-daniel-goleman?trk=mp-reader-card)