



## The Unfinished Leader: Balancing Contradictory Answers to Unsolvable Problems

David L. Dotlich, Peter C. Cairo, Cade Cowan

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With the demands of technology, transparency, and constant connectedness, and calls for higher performance, leaders from the front line to the C-suite face complex dilemmas that cannot be easily denied or postponed. These perplexing, recurring issues are familiar to anyone in a leadership role today, including:

- How do I balance my functional or business unit goals with the needs of my peers and the whole company?
- How do I support and promote others while still advancing my own career?
- How do I emphasize teamwork and still reward the "stars"?
- Can I really devote enough time and energy to both family and work?

These are not "problems" but paradoxes—situations in which there will never be a single correct solution—and while they make many leaders feel overwhelmed and challenged, this remarkable book provides help. *The Unfinished Leader* is a modern handbook for recognizing, facing, and inspiring others to expose the real issues that underlie paradoxes in modern organizations. Leaders must first recognize situations they will never be able to "solve" and understand how to confront the barriers—in their own heads and their organizations—that push them towards seeking ultimate solutions that don't exist. Leading through complexity requires giving up the illusion of control, consistency, and closure, while embracing the reality of being permanently "unfinished."

Drawing from interviews with 100 CEOs and top leaders from a wide range of companies—such as Avon, Nike, Colgate, DeutschePost DHL, Johnson & Johnson, PepsiCo, and many more— *The Unfinished Leader* provides the mindsets and tools to recognize contradictory requirements, understand competing demands, and still be able to take action. No one can find or even should look for perfect solutions to impossible situations. *The Unfinished Leader* will help leaders at all levels understand and excel at their true task: guiding themselves and their teams through ongoing paradoxes, reconciling competing outcomes, continually changing and adapting, and thereby building lasting success.



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