

INSPIRE



The Universal Path for Leading
Yourself and Others

ADAM GALINSKY



HARPER
BUSINESS

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*To the GO Family (Jenn, Asher, and Aden):
You INSPIRE me every day!*

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Introduction

THE JOLT WAS so forceful and so abrupt that Captain Tammie Jo Shults felt like a Mack truck had slammed into the aircraft. “My first thought was that we *had* been hit—that we’d had a midair collision.” The aircraft immediately went into a snap roll to the left, but she and her first officer, Darren Ellisor, instantly caught it and leveled the wings. But as they did so, a roar rushed into the cockpit. Suddenly, they couldn’t see, they couldn’t hear, they couldn’t breathe.

Southwest Airlines Flight 1380’s left engine had experienced catastrophic failure and exploded. But the situation was even more dire than Shults initially realized: debris from the turbine had smashed the left window in row fourteen. The air rushing through the shattered window was causing the deafening roar, the loss of pressure, and the desperate need for oxygen. Even worse, a passenger had been fatally sucked halfway out the window. Shults realized that she and her copilot were now confronted with “an unscripted combination of emergencies . . . hydraulic lines were cut, fuel lines were cut, and we were dealing with drag that we hadn’t ever practiced dealing with.”

Time was critical. At their current altitude in a depressurized plane, Shults and Ellisor had only sixty seconds before they would suffer from oxygen deprivation. But Shults’s first move was to stay the course: it

was Ellisor's turn to fly the plane, and she signaled to him with a head nod and a release of her hands that he was still in control.

To the passengers on board, it seemed like they were free-falling. Passenger Marty Martinez recounted the terrifying sense of doom, "I literally bought WiFi as the plane was going down because I wanted to be able to reach the people I loved . . . thinking these were my final moments on earth." His colleague sitting next to him began typing out a goodbye message to his family. Martinez noted it wasn't just the passengers who appeared to be panicking, but also the flight attendants.

Despite the panic in the main cabin, Shults and Ellisor were in control and already orchestrating a reasonably paced descent. Once they reached a safe altitude, they needed a place to land, and fast. It was Ellisor who noticed how close Philadelphia was. Shults quickly agreed that it was an ideal airport given its long runway and medical resources.

At this point, Shults uttered ten simple words over the intercom that completely transformed the psychological state of the passengers: "We are not going down. We are going to Philly."

Although her message was simple, it was also deeply reassuring. She later noted, "Only a few minutes had passed since the explosion, but a few minutes can seem like an eternity in a life-threatening situation . . . Afterward, the passengers shared how that one simple message made all the difference. It changed the attitude inside the aircraft . . . panic began to subside . . . terror was replaced with possibility."

As the plane approached the tarmac in Philly, Shults retook control of the plane. But there was a problem: when Shults went to make the final right turn to line the plane up with the runway, nothing happened. She was stunned, so stunned that the cockpit microphone recorded her asking for guidance—"Heavenly Father?"—as she desperately tried to figure out what she was missing. She then made the risky decision to ease the throttle back while standing on the right rudder.

The plane turned before it was too late.

At 11:23 a.m. on April 17, 2018, Flight 1380 was safely on the ground in Philadelphia. But Shults wasn't done navigating her plane

or protecting her passengers. She purposely parked the plane right by the fire trucks on the tarmac and even made sure that the trucks were on the damaged side of the plane. Shults also instinctively understood that some of her passengers might leap out onto the wings if they were feeling desperate to get off the plane. To reduce the risk of injury, she turned the flaps to forty degrees to offer a little slide.

When Shults entered the cabin, she proceeded to greet her passengers. This wasn't unusual for Shults, as she would often walk down the aisle during lengthy delays or unusual circumstances. This time she moved more slowly, deliberately looking each passenger in the eye and asking if they were okay. Like her simple update, her attentive journey down the aisle resonated with her passengers, and the larger public. Shults later said, "I've found it intriguing that people covering the story have been more interested in how I treated people after the flight than in what it took to fly the crippled airplane safely to the ground."

When Shults was being physically evaluated a little while later, the EMT asked, "How do you get through security?" When Shults seemed surprised, he continued, "With those nerves of steel . . . you don't even have an elevated heart rate, you're completely calm."

Southwest generously offered the crew an extended period of paid time off, but Shults was back flying only three and a half weeks after the emergency landing. Beyond helping her return to the normalcy of everyday life, she understood her actions would be an important signal to others: "I also thought it was important for my family, and anyone else who was watching, to see I still had confidence in flight, in Southwest Airlines, and in Boeing aircraft." She knew by flying again, she could help prevent "any falsehoods about the incident from taking root."

When Shults later reflected on the successful landing, her mind drifted back to the moments before the flight took off. Unlike many flights, the plane was fully prepped a few minutes before the passengers boarded. Given the extra time, Shults assembled her crew in the galley. This was the first time the crew had worked together and Shults looked for points of connection. She and Ellisor realized that they both had

seniors in high school, and they bonded over finding the right graduation gift. When Shults mentioned her idea of gifting the Book of Proverbs, the three flight attendants began to share their own connections to the Bible. Rachel Fernheimer was excited about her new version, which had room to journal on the side. Kathryn Sandoval mentioned she was in a study of Psalms, and Shults shared that she was also participating in a similar study.

Shults credited this informal conversation as critical to the well-coordinated responses of the crew: “When you talk about things deeper than the weather—your family, your faith—the things that matter to you, even if they’re different, it tends to create a bond. The few minutes we had together before the flight, talking about things that were important to us, created a foundation of trust that we critically needed after the engine failed.”



ON JANUARY 13, 2012, 3,206 passengers and 1,023 crew members were on the *Costa Concordia* for a seven-day Mediterranean voyage. That evening, the ship suddenly deviated from its course to sail closer to the Isle of Giglio. It is debatable why Captain Francesco Schettino brought the ship so precariously close to shore. He claims he wanted to salute other mariners. Prosecutors would later claim that the married Schettino was trying to impress his mistress, a Moldovan dancer, who was on board. What isn’t debatable is what happened next: the *Costa Concordia* struck the Scole Rocks, a reef eight meters below the surface. The collision was so forceful that it tore a 160-foot hole in the port side of the ship. Water quickly engulfed the generators and engines, causing an electrical blackout.

Had Schettino taken immediate action, it’s likely that every passenger and crew member would have been safely rescued. But that’s not what happened. Instead, Schettino focused on a different kind of damage control. When talking to the boat’s crisis coordinator, he tried to

deflect blame by claiming the accident resulted from the electrical problem, rather than vice versa. And he would later try to put the shipwreck squarely on the helmsman. Even as the ship began to sink, Schettino was spending his mental energy on getting his story straight. He asked the boat's crisis coordinator, "What should I say to the media? . . . To the port authorities I have said that we had . . . a blackout."

Because of his focus on saving his reputation, Schettino delayed reporting the accident to the Italian Search and Rescue Authority. And even when he did contact them, he dithered for twenty minutes before he came clean on the accident and the dire situation. As a result, the evacuation didn't begin for more than an hour after the ship was ripped apart by the reef. And, even then, many passengers claimed they didn't hear the evacuation orders.

While passengers and other crew were scrambling to find safety, Schettino himself was already safely in a lifeboat. But Schettino took no credit for his lifeboat feat, claiming he unintentionally "fell" into the lifeboat due to the ship's tilt. And you might have missed seeing Schettino in the lifeboat, given he was no longer in his captain's uniform. Somehow, Schettino found time to change into a suit before fleeing from his sinking ship.

The following transcript reveals the conversation that Schettino had with a member of the coast guard, Gregorio De Falco, while sitting in the lifeboat.

DE FALCO: Listen, this is De Falco from Livorno. Am I speaking with the captain?

SCHETTINO: I am Captain Schettino, Chief.

DE FALCO: Listen, Schettino. There are people trapped on board.

Now, you go with your lifeboat. Under the bow of the ship, on the right side, there is a ladder. You climb on that ladder and go on board the ship . . . and tell me how many people are there. Is that clear?

SCHETTINO: At this moment the ship is listing.

DE FALCO: Get back on the ship and tell me how many people there are, tell me if there are children, women and what type of help they need. And you tell me the number of each of these categories. Is that clear?

SCHETTINO: Please . . .

DE FALCO: There is no “please” about it. Get back on board. Assure me you are going back on board!

SCHETTINO: I’m in a lifeboat, I am under here. I am not going anywhere. I am here.

DE FALCO: What are you doing, Captain?

SCHETTINO: I am here to coordinate the rescue . . .

DE FALCO (INTERRUPTING): What are you coordinating there! Get on board! Coordinate the rescue from on board! Are you refusing?

SCHETTINO: No, I am not refusing.

DE FALCO (YELLING): You get back on board! That is an order! There is nothing else for you to consider. You have sounded the “Abandon Ship.” Now I am giving the orders. Get back on board. Is that clear? Don’t you hear me?

SCHETTINO: I am going aboard.

DE FALCO: My rescue craft is at the bow. Go! There are already bodies, Schettino. Go!

SCHETTINO: How many bodies are there?

DE FALCO: I don’t know! . . . Christ, you should be the one telling me that!

SCHETTINO: Do you realize that it is dark and we can’t see anything . . . Look, Chief, I want to go aboard but the other lifeboat here has stopped and is drifting. I have called . . .

DE FALCO (INTERRUPTING): You have been telling me this for an hour! Now, go aboard! Get on board and tell me immediately how many people there are!

SCHETTINO: [No response]

DE FALCO: Listen, Schettino, perhaps you have saved yourself from the sea, but I will make you pay for this. For **** sake, go back on board!

Schettino ended up paying a price for his actions. He was convicted of multiple crimes and ordered to spend sixteen years in prison: ten years for multiple manslaughters, five years for causing a shipwreck, and one year for abandoning the passengers at the time of the sinking.



TAMMIE JO SHULTS and Francesco Schettino were both captains of their own vessels. And they both faced similar crises as they contended with gaping holes in their vehicles. But they couldn't be more different. Beyond their obvious dissimilarities in gender and nationality, what really distinguishes these two captains is how they acted during a crisis.

Shults was inspiring. Schettino was infuriating.

Inspiring leaders, like Shults, transform a crisis into a routine and ordinary course of action. The explosion and subsequent damage to her plane were not foreseeable by Shults, yet she was fully accountable and in complete control during the crisis that ensued.

In contrast, infuriating leaders, like Schettino, pervert and twist the routine until it turns into a crisis. Schettino should have anticipated how being so close to the shore could cripple his ship. And then he refused to take any responsibility for the crisis that he had created.

Inspiring and infuriating leaders do not only exist in times of crisis. They are part of the everyday fabric of our lives as they transform commonplace moments into psychologically remarkable ones.

I want you to think about a Shults from your own life, to reflect on someone that inspired you. Your inspiring figure can come from anywhere in your life: a relative or religious leader, a teacher or a coach, a boss or a peer.

What characterizes this feeling of being inspired? When I have asked people across the globe to describe the feeling of being inspired,

they frequently use words like *bright*, *light*, and *warmth*. Others describe it as a mix of *awe*, *admiration*, and *wonder*. And many recognize it as a wellspring of *hope* and *possibility*.

Now I want you to pinpoint the *cause* of that feeling. What was it *about* this person that made you feel inspired? Try to identify the precise attribute they possessed that inspired you.

I call these people Inspiring Leaders. As a noun, inspiring leaders represent the people in our lives who motivate and guide us to become a better version of ourselves. As a gerund, it captures how each of us—through our own behavior, words, and presence—can inspire others. These two meanings serve as a guide for growing and spreading the seeds of inspiration across the globe.

Now, I want you to think about a Schettino from your life. The Schettinos in our lives also have the capacity to change us inside. But people often use words like *hot*, *red*, *searing*, and *boiling* to describe the infuriating leaders of their lives. These leaders create a seething cauldron of rage and resentment. I want you to really feel that fury. Notice how overwhelming it is, how consuming it is. Now identify the root of that infuriation. What was it *about* this person that really made your blood boil?

I've conducted this exercise—reflecting on the Inspiring and Infuriating Leaders in our lives—with thousands of people from across the globe. My research has led to three insights about leadership, and more broadly about human nature.

At first blush, Shults and Schettino couldn't seem more different. But they are more connected than we might think. In fact, Shults and Schettino are mirror images of each other, standing on opposite ends of a continuum. That is the first key insight from my research: *Inspiring and Infuriating Leaders exist on an enduring continuum*.

The second insight is that the thousands of examples I have collected around the globe can be reduced to three key factors along this inspiring-infuriating continuum. Shults and Schettino revealed these three dimensions during their crises.

Shults was *visionary*. She was able to see the big picture and give her passengers a reassuring *why* when the plane was rapidly descending: “We are not going down. We are going to Philly.” In contrast, Schettino was narrowly focused on minimizing his responsibility and deflecting blame.

Shults was an *exemplar of desired behavior*. She was a calm, courageous, and competent protector. Her nerves of steel never wavered. Schettino instead cowardly abandoned his ship.

Shults was a *great mentor*. She empowered her copilot, Ellisor, by letting him continue flying the plane, and after they safely landed, she was quick to credit him for suggesting they land in Philly. She took the time to get to know her flight attendants. She even made sure her passengers were emotionally okay after the ordeal was over. Conversely, Schettino selfishly put his own well-being above that of his passengers and crew. He never even expressed any remorse or empathy, declaring at his trial, “I cannot feel responsible.”

These three factors—visionary, exemplar, mentor—represent how we see the world, how we are in the world, and how we interact with others in the world. We can inspire others through our words, our actions, and our interactions.

The third insight is that the three dimensions that make up this enduring inspiring-infuriating continuum are universal. The exact same characteristics emerge in every culture and country across the globe. There is not a single inspiring or infuriating attribute that is unique to a specific country or region. Of course, how each element gets expressed may vary by country or culture, but the attributes themselves and the continuum they represent are part of a universal tapestry. Being inspired and infuriated by others is rooted in the very architecture of the human brain.

The three dimensions of inspiring leader are universal because each one fulfills a set of fundamental human needs. Visionary fulfills the human need for meaning and purpose. Exemplar fulfills the human need for protection and passion. Mentor fulfills the human need for support and status.

MY DISCOVERY—THAT INSPIRING and infuriating leaders exist on an enduring continuum that is made up of three universal factors—carries a profound implication: *Each and every one of us has the potential to be inspiring*. Because there is a universal and systematic set of inspiring attributes, those skills can be taught, they can be nurtured, and they can be developed.

The universal continuum is philosophically interesting and practically important. Theoretically, it answers the enduring question about whether inspiring leaders are born or made. My research shows that we are not born as inspiring or infuriating individuals. Rather, it is our current behavior that either inspires or infuriates. Our words, our actions, and our interactions create either a wellspring of hope and possibility or a seething cauldron of rage and resentment inside others. Shults's reassuring words created immediate hope while her compassion lingered with her passengers. Schettino, in contrast, filled De Falco with a rage so intense that he thirsted for retribution.

Although there is a universal tool kit for inspiring others, the process isn't easy; life often slants us toward the infuriating end of the continuum. We are too often a Schettino. But the continuum also offers hope. When we find ourselves drifting to the infuriating end, we already have a clear path back to the other side. We can—with the right reflection, the right preparation, and the right intention—move from being a Schettino to being a Shults.

IN THE PAGES that follow, I will show how understanding the universal path of inspiring others can help address the most pressing problems and dilemmas we face daily: How do I negotiate so I can create more value for myself and others? How do I make wise decisions that produce innovative ideas? How do I allocate scarce resources fairly? How do I navigate an increasingly diverse world?

To answer these questions and guide you toward the inspiring end of the continuum, I integrate the scientific and the personal. *Inspire* is deeply scientific. Building on my quarter century of research and hundreds of scientific articles, I unpack the empirical basis of what it means to be inspiring, the systematic levers that create a vicious cycle of infuriation, and the scientific pathway for staying on the inspiring end of the continuum. These data-based principles will guide you to have a more positive impact on others and build a more inspiring world.

But *Inspire* is also deeply personal. I not only present compelling examples from across the globe, but I also share illustrative stories from my own life. My hope is that *Inspire* is also personal for you, that it helps you embark on a journey through your past and present to forge a brighter future for yourself and for those around you.

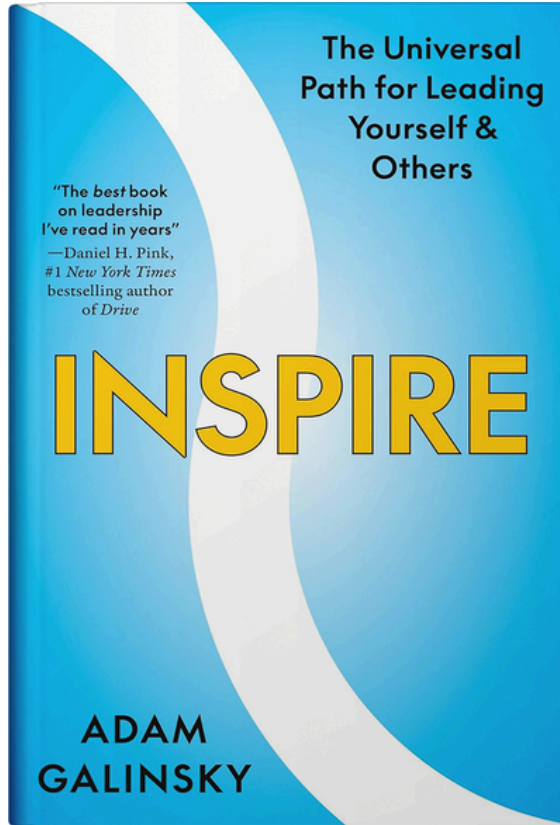
Inspire isn't just about leadership. It's really about life. I have been surprised by how many people have used its principles to inform and transform their personal relationships. A CEO told me *Inspire* made him a better spouse. A Fortune 100 board member shared that it made her a more motivating parent. A student confided that it helped him become a more dependable friend.

Before we start, I want to emphasize two ideas that are so critical for our journey together. First, as leaders, we do not have a choice of whether we have an impact or not—neutrality is not an option; we will either inspire or infuriate. However, we do have control over the *type* of impact we have. We always have a choice of whether to inspire or infuriate.

Second, leaders are not born, they are made. Because there is a scientific basis to inspiring others, each of us can learn, nurture, and develop the capacity to be inspiring. That means every single one of us has the potential to inspire others.

You can be a Shults. You can be a more inspiring version of yourself. Let's learn how.

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