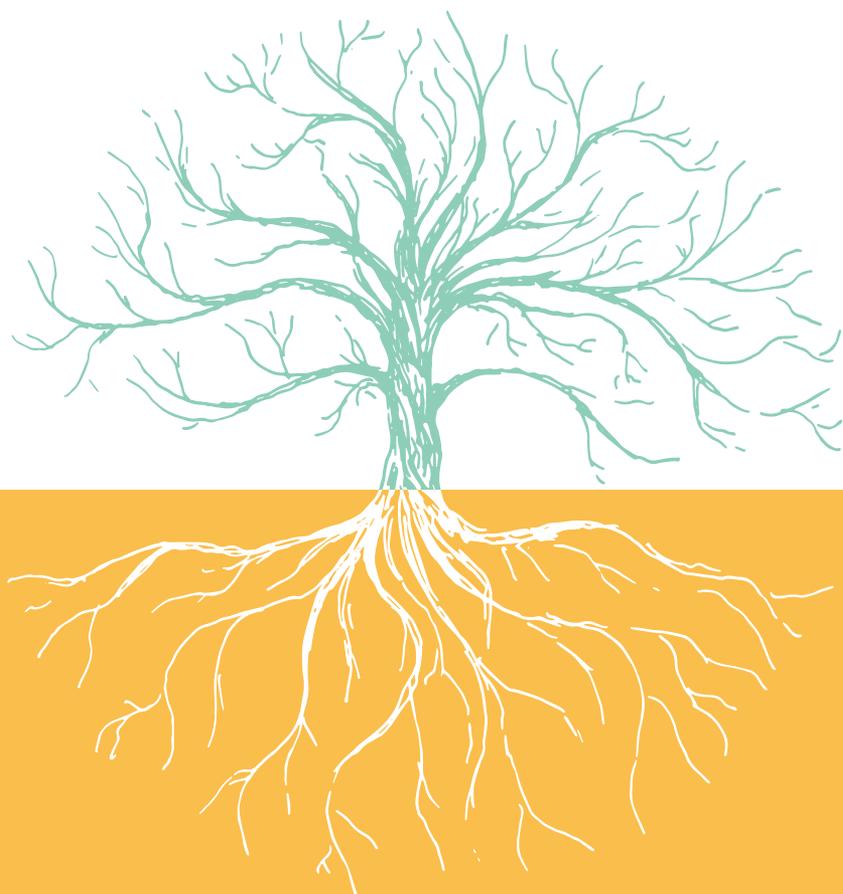


Anchored

Staying grounded
when everything speeds up



ROCHELLE TROW

'True leadership begins with continuous self-realignment. This book will not only make me a better leader, but also truer to myself and those I'm privileged to impact.'

Rozanne Leyds, Partner, Professional Services

Today's relentless pace is quietly eroding the balance of even the most successful leaders.

Anchored offers a path back to inner strength for high-achieving professionals who project success yet carry an invisible burden. It shows you how to remain centred and impactful under pressure, so you can turn fear into grounded courage, doubt into clarity and overdrive into choiceful action.

Read this book to:

- Recognise the hidden patterns and fears that keep you performing instead of thriving
- See yourself clearly in the mirror of your own habits, without judgement or denial
- Steady yourself when doubt, pressure or perfectionism threaten to take over
- Choose responses rooted in authenticity rather than fear or the need for approval
- Lead with presence, purpose and humanity to create success that doesn't cost your wholeness



Rochelle Trow is an HR executive, coach and author with over twenty-five years' experience across retail, fast-moving consumer goods, consumer health, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and semiconductors. Having held global roles and worked across many countries and cultures, she's seen first-hand the human cost of corporate life and understands how to help leaders thrive in business without losing themselves.

Find out more: rochelletrow.com | thechangecanvas.ch

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Praise

'A rich and insightful guide for leaders navigating today's disruptive world. Rochelle blends lived experience, grounded research, and practical reflection in a way that feels both real and usable. A book for those who want to lead through pressure and change, while still being yourself.'

— **Han-Peter Gai**, Chief Executive Officer

'A grounded, hopeful, and deeply relevant guide for today's leaders. Rochelle brings together research, realism, and compassion to show that thriving within the system is not only possible but powerful. A book to return to whenever the pace feels too fast to breathe.'

— **Rute Fernandes**, Pharmaceuticals Executive

'This work prompted deep introspection about my own journey, the patterns I've carried, and which ones I now choose to change. Through Rochelle's vulnerable sharing, I'm reminded that true leadership begins with continuous self-realignment. It will

not only make me a better leader, but also truer to myself and those I'm privileged to impact.'

— **Rozanne Leyds**, Partner, Big Four Professional Services firm

'Humble, truthful, and quietly provoking. Rochelle brings lived experience and sage guidance together in a powerful reflection for anyone striving to lead with purpose and alignment.'

— **April Ho-Nishimura**, Global Customer Experience Executive

'A treasure trove of wisdom for anyone who loves the world of work yet feels its weight. Rochelle invites us to stay in the system, not to escape it, and to rediscover energy, balance, and purpose from within. Her writing honours both the intelligence of organisations and the humanity of the people who keep them alive.'

— **Teresa Mazur**, Global HR Executive

'Brilliant in its depth and clarity – a rare blend of learning, healing, and performance. Rochelle's book is gripping, reflective, and real; a companion to return to, not just read once.'

— **Karen Rivoire**, HR Executive and Board Adviser

'A powerful, deeply practical guide for anyone ready to move from surviving to truly thriving. Rochelle brings clarity, honesty, and heart to a complex topic, helping readers see that while the system may not change overnight, we can.'

— **Marina Cvetkovic**, CEO and Board Adviser

'This book makes transformation feel both possible and practical. Rochelle blends knowledge and wisdom with grace and compassion, guiding readers to reconnect with who they truly are – not through theory, but through lived, human experience.'

— **Jenny Landgren**, Leadership Author and Behavioural Science Expert

'Learning to recognise and respond to the signs that something isn't right is at the heart of this book. Through real-life examples, Rochelle shows what happens when we ignore those signals and how to listen, take stock, and adjust in real time. Anchoring ourselves, setting boundaries, and aligning with our values creates a steady foundation that grounds us amid chaos and pressure. Each conscious choice we make from that place strengthens us and ripples into the world around us.'

— **Christine D'Mello**, Author and Coach

'A compassionate and eye-opening book that helps you recognise when coping has quietly taken over. Rochelle shows how simple pauses and honest reflection can restore clarity, strength, and joy, lessons that apply as much to life as to work.'

— **Namrata Adsul**, Project Manager and Author

'Losing oneself and one's voice is a tragedy that can be avoided. Through lived experience and deeply supportive guidance, Rochelle opens a clear path to freedom and self-trust for anyone ready to lead without losing themselves.'

— **Linda Vettrus-Nichols**, Clarity Coach and Author

'Rochelle has walked the corporate tightrope and emerged with hard-won wisdom. Her insights would have saved me years of struggle and helped me find balance sooner. This is a book for anyone who wants to succeed in demanding systems without sacrificing their health, family, or peace of mind.'

— **Ambassador Terry Earthwind Nichols**, Top 10 Thought Leader and Author

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when everything speeds up

ROCHELLE TROW

R^ethink

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Author's disclaimer

This book draws on my own reflections and on real experiences of the many people I've worked with and learned from. While the events described are true in their essence, identifying details and names have been changed to protect privacy. The stories are shared with respect and care, in service of the insights they reveal.

For my sons, Tako and Zviko, who were born into a world that moves fast and measures worth by noise and numbers. Learn to move differently. Pause. Feel. Choose what matters to you before the world tells you what to chase. Remember that who you are beneath it all is already enough and always will be.

For everyone finding their way through this same world, I hope these words help you breathe a little easier and find steady ground again.

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Foreword

What if the very qualities that make you an exceptional leader – your steadiness, intuition and humanity – are also the first to erode in a fast-moving system?

During more than twenty-five years of coaching senior executives, boards and leadership teams around the world, I have witnessed how high-performing leaders can appear wholly successful on the outside while quietly disconnecting on the inside. They deliver, perform and adapt – they seemingly function well – and yet something essential begins to thin out. Ease. Presence. Joy. The simple, yet profound, sense of being anchored in oneself.

Every leader I meet today faces the same tension: how to stay true to themselves when the pace around them keeps rising. Leaders don't need more productivity

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hacks; they need a way to stay whole while the world accelerates.

I first met Rochelle many years ago when she was an HR executive at a global pharmaceutical company and hired my firm, then Heimann Cvetkovic & Partners, to work with her executive team. I later became her personal executive coach. From our first encounter, I knew she was different. Rochelle observed what others missed. She could name the undercurrent beneath the conversation, not to critique, but to unlock growth. She articulated the unseen with a grounded precision that made people stop, breathe and reconsider. Few leaders embody both intelligence and humanity in equal measure. Rochelle has always carried both deeply. I am honoured to call her a former client, a long-time colleague in the work of leadership and a cherished friend.

Corporate systems are built for speed, efficiency and delivery, and while there is nothing inherently wrong with that, the system's pace too often begins to define the leader's identity. Motion replaces meaning. Composure replaces honesty. Achievement replaces aliveness. I have sat with countless leaders at the exact moment they realise the cost, when success begins to feel strangely hollow, or when they notice they are tired in a way that sleep doesn't fix.

Rochelle knows that moment intimately. She writes from lived experience, not only as someone who once pushed herself beyond her limits, but as someone who

later chose to return to corporate life on her own terms, with a wiser and more grounded way of leading.

That is what makes *Anchored* so profoundly important. This book gives you a practical, immediately usable way of leading that keeps you grounded, clear and effective in the moments that matter most.

This book is not another self-help promise of balance or boundaries. It is a deeper, wiser invitation to reclaim the parts of yourself that the system will not protect. Rochelle shows you how to stay grounded while everything around you accelerates. Not by slowing the world down, but by strengthening your own inner steadiness. She reminds us that wholeness is not created for you by an organisation; it is safeguarded by attention, intention and the courage to listen inwardly even when the system rewards you for ignoring yourself.

For leaders who want to succeed in a corporate environment without losing themselves, Rochelle offers both a mirror and a path. She captures the quiet ache so many feel but rarely name: the fatigue, the pressure to keep performing, the subtle drift away from your own voice. She offers a way back to clarity, presence and the kind of leadership that feels not only effective but *true*. Her approach helps you stay clear, decisive and effective even under pressure.

What I admire most about this book is its honesty. Rochelle does not preach; she reveals. She does not

position herself above the reader; she walks beside you. Through her stories, insights and gentle provocations, she gives leaders permission to pause long enough to reconnect with the wisdom they already carry. In doing so, she subtly begins to reshape how the system itself can evolve, one grounded leader at a time.

Throughout her book, Rochelle gives leaders reflective tools, honest stories and practices that bring you back to yourself. She shows you where you can lose yourself, why it happens, and how to return with more wisdom than before.

If you are holding this book, chances are you already know that something needs to shift. Not your ambition, talent or commitment, but the way you source your energy and your sense of self as you lead. Rochelle will show you that you can contribute powerfully without abandoning yourself in the process. You can move fast without losing depth. You can succeed without sacrificing what makes you human. You will walk away with strategies you can put into action immediately.

In a world that keeps speeding up, *Anchored* is a rare gift – a reminder that the most sustainable form of leadership begins not with acceleration, but with grounding. Not with striving, but with presence. Not with proving, but with remembering who you are.

This is a book every leader should read before burnout, not after it.

Settle in. Take a deep breath. Let this book offer you the pause you didn't realise you needed, and the grounding you have always deserved.

Nicole Heimann

Founder and Former Co-CEO, Heimann Cvetkovic & Partners AG, Author and Global Thought Leader in Authentic Leadership

Introduction

If you've picked up this book, my guess is that others already see you as successful. You've worked hard, earned credibility and bear the kind of responsibility that makes people look to you when it matters. They see someone steady, capable, driven. What they don't always see is the load you quietly carry. The constant rhythm of expectations, the pull to keep up and the fatigue that sometimes follows success. You've achieved so much, and yet, somewhere along the way, you've started to feel a subtle drift away from your natural rhythm. Outwardly, you seem composed, but inside, you feel stretched.

Maybe you find yourself staying quiet in meetings even though you know you have something worth saying. Perhaps you nod along to decisions that don't sit right with you, because speaking up feels risky. Maybe you're simply tired; not defeated, just weary from always

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being 'on'. Perhaps you miss the ease you once felt – the sense that your work and who you are still belonged in the same story.

Here's the heart of what this book offers in one line: a way to keep contributing and succeeding in fast-moving systems without losing the steadiness and humanity that make your work meaningful.

Modern work often rewards motion over meaning, composure over honesty and delivery over depth. Almost every leader I know has felt that tension – the pull to deliver and the quiet wish to feel more human while doing it.

Wholeness isn't something a system can hand you; it's something you can choose to protect and restore. Every conscious choice you make begins to reshape the system around you. Too many leaders discover this only when they've already pushed themselves too far – in the fatigue, sleepless nights, or hollowness after reaching a milestone that doesn't feel as satisfying as it should. I don't want you to wait for that breaking point. Consider this book an invitation to *pause*, look beneath the surface and choose differently.

Here's what's possible if you do: leadership that feels lighter, truer and more sustainable, where you no longer trade health for results, voice for safety, or presence for approval.

I know this tension firsthand. You can love your work and still feel the quiet cost of how the system runs. For me, it didn't happen all at once. It built slowly through long days, late nights and the subtle pressure to keep performing even when something inside was asking me to pause. I had built a career on steadiness and delivery, but somewhere along the way, that steadiness turned into survival.

I remember one meeting that made this build-up impossible to ignore. We were debating a critical decision. Privately, several executives had voiced concerns to me. Yet, when it mattered, those doubts seemingly disappeared, and silence passed for alignment. I didn't speak up either, not out of agreement, but because I was tired of carrying the unease that others avoided. Driving home that evening, a realisation landed quietly but firmly: I was not merely tired, I felt disconnected. Disconnected from my voice, from ease and from the parts of me that used to feel alive at work. I could feel the beginnings of burnout, though I didn't call it that yet.

This *awakening* isn't a single event, but the dawning awareness that you have learned to lead for the system while slowly losing touch with yourself. You have mastered performance yet drift from presence. And the cost is no longer invisible; it shows up in your body, your energy and your joy.

This book is for anyone who recognises that pattern. For people who have already proven themselves and

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are ready to lead with the same sense of well-being that fuels their success. For leaders who want their leadership to feel as real and human as the values that guide it. For those who care deeply about others, their purpose and the bigger picture, and who want to stay grounded in themselves.

It doesn't matter what your title is or where you work. What connects you to these pages is the quiet truth you already sense: a way to succeed that feels whole, sustainable and true to who you are.

I was born in apartheid-era South Africa into a family of humble means. Going from those beginnings, where doors were closed to people like me, to sitting at global executive tables wasn't inevitable; it was a deliberate climb driven by persistence, learning and faith in what was possible.

Over the years, I have worked in some of the world's most respected organisations, guided by exceptional mentors and coaches, and been exposed to leadership programmes that many only dream of attending. The truth is, none of that prepares you for the moment when success stops feeling sustainable. Those programmes teach you how to lead *for* the system. They offer frameworks, but not wholeness.

That's why our voices matter here: mine, yours and those of the many leaders who walk this path. Together, they trace what it means to stay whole while leading within systems that rarely pause for breath.

Unlike many leadership books, which offer steps, models or habits to master, *Anchored* won't give you a checklist. Growth is circular. You don't outgrow fear or master alignment once and for all; you return to them in new forms, again and again. *Anchored* recognises that reality. It's written for people who live and lead in motion and who don't have the luxury of stepping away to find themselves. That work happens here, in the middle of deadlines, meetings and conversations that matter.

This book isn't theory. It's a conversation and a mix of stories, reflections and gentle provocations that help you turn awareness into daily practice. You'll find reflection questions, real-life examples and simple ways to integrate what you're learning as you read. It's written to meet you where you are and walk alongside you as you begin to notice your own patterns.

There are various anchors, a self-assessment and some useful metaphors, but they're not checklists or quick fixes. They're mirrors, designed to help you see differently and make more conscious choices in the flow of real work and life. That's what makes this book different. It's not about escaping the system or fixing it; it's about seeing yourself clearly within it and leading from that position of clarity, one grounded choice at a time.

The leaders I work with often describe this shift as feeling steadier, simpler and more honest. They feel more anchored, less reactive. It's less about proving, more about being present.

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If you choose to do this work, here's what becomes possible:

- **Clarity:** A way to reconnect with your values so your decisions feel aligned, not forced.
- **Confidence:** The steadiness that comes from integrity, not the fragile kind built on approval.
- **Boundaries:** The ability to protect your energy, so you stop running on empty and start showing up whole.
- **Sustainable growth:** Success that lasts, because it's rooted in who you are, not in how much you can endure.

These shifts come from a rhythm of wholeness – a daily practice of noticing, choosing and returning to what matters most.

Here's the promise: you don't need to leave to come back to yourself. You can thrive within the system, succeed on your terms and finally feel aligned with the life you've worked so hard to build. The system will take time to change, but you don't have to wait. Each anchored choice you make helps shift its rhythm from within. That's how change begins: not by waiting for a new system, but by becoming steadier within it.

PART ONE

THE PARADOX WITHIN WHICH WE LEAD

A paradox isn't a riddle. It's two truths that seem to oppose each other, but *both matter*. In modern leadership, paradox lives everywhere: the system needs results; people need renewal. You can love your work and still feel the quiet cost of how the system runs. The modern corporate world wasn't designed to make people whole. It was designed to make things work efficiently, predictably and at scale.

Real strength isn't about slowing the world down; it's about standing on strong ground while it speeds up. As Brené Brown notes in *Strong Ground* (2025), steadiness – not speed – is what lets us keep moving with purpose in the face of uncertainty.

Part One lays the foundation we'll use throughout the book. Chapter 1 names how systems shape behaviour

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(often before we notice), why fear and approval get reinforced, and how a well-trained ego can become both armour and identity. This isn't an argument against ambition or structure. It's an invitation to lead from steadiness within them.

1

The System Trade-Off

When I talk about the corporate system, I mean the shared design of modern organisations – the hierarchy, incentives and unspoken norms that keep productivity high and fear just beneath the surface. Although the examples in this book draw from corporate life, the same dynamics play out in any environment that measures worth and rewards speed, ranging from start-ups to hospitals and from NGOs to government offices.

Throughout this book, when I refer to ‘the system,’ I mean the full operating environment we now inhabit; the intertwined layers of structure, technology and culture that define modern work. It includes the business models, targets and incentives; the hierarchies and approval chains that govern decisions; and, increasingly,

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the digital systems and AI tools that automate judgement, accelerate pace and reshape what belonging means. These forces together create a rhythm that rewards speed, compliance and control, often at the expense of reflection, creativity and connection.

To be clear: this isn't an argument against the system. I've thrived within it, learned from it and still believe in what it can achieve when it works well. Corporate structures can mobilise brilliance at a scale no individual ever could. The problem isn't the existence of hierarchy or ambition; it's that the system changes slowly while people within it evolve more quickly. The real work is learning how to stay anchored while the system catches up – to build your own strong foundation rather than waiting for the ground to steady itself.

When I refer to our 'inner systems', I mean the human patterns – emotional, nervous and psychological – that adapt to survive inside it. The instinct to brace before a meeting. The over-preparation that keeps you from disappointing others. The quiet self-doubt that whispers, 'Don't risk it.'

I've spent over twenty-five years inside this world, working across seven global organisations spanning retail, FMCG, pharmaceuticals, consumer health, manufacturing, and semiconductors. Different industries, brands and products, but beneath the surface, the same design. The bigger the organisation, the more complex the matrix. There are layers of business units, divisions

and functional hierarchies, each with competing goals, metrics and incentives. In theory, these structures create alignment and accountability. In practice, they breed tension. Sales and marketing fight for visibility, R&D and operations for resources, HR for credibility, and leaders spend as much time managing politics as they do performance. Today, that tension is amplified by technology: automation accelerates timelines, AI filters data before humans can, and decisions that once required dialogue now move at algorithmic speed. The human system hasn't evolved as quickly as the digital one, and exhaustion often lives in the gap.

As an HR executive, I wore two hats: one functional, the other business. My bonus was driven by my business unit's success, and not necessarily by the broader health of the organisation. That meant that, even when I sat at the executive table as the voice of people and culture, the commercial pressures shaped what I said – and what I stayed silent about. The same reward mechanisms that are meant to drive performance also quietly train fear: fear of losing standing, fear of being left out, fear of not belonging.

Many leaders don't choose silence out of apathy; they do it out of fear of losing credibility, security or belonging. Because behind the polished corridors and strategy slides sits an unspoken truth: the higher you climb, the narrower the space for dissent. Every voice knows the cost of being too honest. Question too much, and you risk being seen as difficult. Challenge too early, and you

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risk being left out of the next transformation. So the conversations grow quieter, the smiles more practised, and self-protection slowly replaces authenticity.

The system doesn't ask for this explicitly, but it's *inadvertently* engineered into its reward mechanisms. Performance ratings, pay grades, job titles and nine-box talent matrices become subtle signals of worth. Those labelled 'key talent' are given access to leadership programmes, exposure and stretch roles – the very tools that amplify visibility and ambition. Meanwhile, the majority are expected to sustain the machine from below, often with limited access to opportunities for growth or reflection. Layered on top of this now sits digital visibility – engagement metrics, productivity trackers, online presence scores – new currencies of credibility that keep the same old fear alive, just coded differently.

Over time, people learn how to navigate the system – how to present, agree and adapt *just enough* to stay safe and progress. Systems shape behaviour long before people notice. They don't just direct what we do; they teach us who to be. That's where conscious choice comes in. There's nothing wrong with climbing the ladder or seeking reward; the question is whether the climb still aligns with who you are. Ambition anchored in truth is healthy. Ambition driven by fear or approval quietly erodes you.

Whether we intend to or not, we begin to live split lives: one that performs, and one that feels. We stay visible to

the organisation but invisible to ourselves. We achieve, but our inner voice grows quieter. It's a trade-off we've been conditioned to make. The same traits that enable you to thrive within the system can slowly separate you from yourself.

This is the paradox every modern leader inhabits. When I say 'leader', I mean anyone shaping outcomes, whether you manage teams, projects, households or ideas. Leadership in this context is less about position and more about presence.

The system values certainty; wholeness invites doubt. The system prizes independence; wholeness depends on connection. The system rewards endurance; wholeness calls for renewal. The system celebrates composure; wholeness requires honesty. These aren't contradictions to fix; they're tensions to hold. The first keeps the organisation alive. The other keeps the people alive.

Between these worlds stands what I call the 'ego' – not arrogance, but the part of us that builds identity around safety, control and approval. It's the voice that says, 'I'll be enough when I achieve, when I'm recognised, when I'm needed.' In the corporate world, that voice is rewarded early and often. It protects us from exclusion but also distances us from truth. It helps us survive, but it can't help us evolve. Over time, the ego becomes both armour and identity – loyal, brilliant and exhausted.

The work of conscious leadership isn't to reject the system or shame the ego; it's to bring awareness to both. To use the very insight the system gives us about scale, structure and accountability while staying honest about what it costs when we forget ourselves. This book isn't about leaving the corporate world. It's about learning to stay whole within it and meet its demands without sacrificing your own. Because the system will take time to change, our power lies in how we show up within it. When we stand on strong personal ground – values, awareness and self-trust – we set in motion a ripple that slowly shifts culture around us. Culture isn't built in off-sites or values statements; it's built in the micro-choices we make every day, how we speak up, how we recover after setbacks, and how we react when pressure rises. When those choices come from awareness instead of fear, culture changes itself.

As AI continues to transform how we work and connect, these small acts of grounded humanity matter more than ever. They're how we begin to influence the system, not by forcing it to change overnight, but by holding our own foundation steadily enough for the ripple to spread. It's true, the system can be hard to live in. It asks a lot, gives little space, and sometimes leaves us questioning whether we can stay without losing ourselves. But it is possible. The system may shape us, but it doesn't define us. What defines us is how we choose to stand grounded, aware and willing to move forward, even when the ground beneath us shifts.

This book follows the rhythm: **Notice** → **Anchor** → **Choose** → **Return**. It's a rhythm that helps you stay awake, steady and whole, right in the heart of the system.

It isn't a manual to master or a framework to memorise; it's a rhythm to return to – a way of noticing where you are, what you need, and how to come back when you drift. You don't need to escape the system to find yourself again. You can lead with presence, succeed on your terms and feel at home in the life you've worked so hard to build.

Think of this work as unfolding in simple cycles:

- **Connect with your values** – let values be the compass that guides tough choices.
- **Listen inwardly** – the signals you override are often the truths you need most.
- **Embody wholeness** – show up as you are; authenticity restores energy.
- **Act with integrity** – close the gap between inner truth and outer action.
- **Reclaim freedom** – not by leaving, but by staying awake and real within the system.

You'll revisit these practices throughout the book, following a pattern of noticing, anchoring, choosing and returning to what matters most.

The Wholeness Journey map

Before we dive deeper, it helps to have a reference point showing the rhythm at a glance. The Wholeness Journey map below represents a simple way to see the inner movement this book takes you through.

The terms used in the map signify the following:

- **Insight:** What this Part helps you see
- **Pull:** The emotional tension you may feel
- **Practice:** How it comes to life in reality
- **Shift:** What begins to change in you

The map isn't a framework to memorise; it's a companion you can return to whenever you lose your footing. Think of it as a compass showing where you are in the journey and what's shifting in you at each stage.

Part One – The Paradox Within Which We Lead:

- **Insight:** You can't control how fast the world moves, but you can decide where and how you stand in it.
- **Pull:** The tension between performance and presence – the system demands speed while your spirit craves steadiness.
- **Practice:** Notice the system in you – the rush, the silence, the pride that hides fatigue.
- **Shift:** Ground yourself first. Strength becomes steadiness rather than control.

Part Two – Beliefs That Make Us Survive:

- **Insight:** The patterns you learned to stay safe and succeed, even when they cost you energy or authenticity.
- **Pull:** Fear sits in the body; it drives you to over-deliver, please others and keep control.
- **Practice:** Notice how the system often rewards composure, reliability and endurance, even when they keep you small.
- **Shift:** As awareness grows, you see that these coping mechanisms once kept you safe but now quietly separate you from yourself. The cost isn't only exhaustion; it's subtle self-abandonment.

Part Three – Anchors That Help Us Thrive:

- **Insight:** Steadiness comes from awareness, boundaries and alignment.
- **Pull:** Fear is still there, but now you meet it consciously instead of letting it steer.
- **Practice:** You come home to yourself through three simple anchors:
 - Awareness – seeing what's true.
 - Boundaries – protecting what matters.
 - Alignment – leading from within.
- **Shift:** Fear becomes information instead of instruction. You act out of integrity rather than defence.

Part Four – When Doubt Speaks, Wholeness Replies:

- **Insight:** After growth comes hesitation, the mind's way of testing your courage.
- **Pull:** Doubt lives in the mind; fear lives in the body. They speak over each other, one questioning your worth, the other tightening your chest.
- **Practice:** Three familiar voices appear:
 - 'If they see the real me, they'll think I'm not enough.'
 - 'If I draw the line, I'll lose everything I've built.'
 - 'Better the version I know than the self I don't.'
- **Shift:** Doubt becomes discernment, a sign of expansion, not failure. Fear alerts; the mind interprets. Growth begins when both are heard.

Part Five – Thriving Within The System:

- **Insight:** Wholeness is the meeting point of the body and mind, uniting what grounds you with what guides you.
- **Pull:** Fear shows up first, doubt follows fast. When you meet both with awareness, steadiness replaces reactivity.
- **Practice:** You bring insight into motion, meeting fear differently and shaping your days around what you truly value.

- **Shift:** You learn to coexist with the system without abandoning yourself in it. Wholeness becomes a rhythm: Notice → Anchor → Choose → Return.

The three threads that run through it all:

- Fear speaks through the body.
- Doubt speaks through the mind.
- Wholeness begins when the two learn to listen to each other.

If you'd like a printable version of **The Wholeness Journey** for reflection or journalling, you can download it at rochelletrouw.com.

Throughout the book, you'll also find short Research Spotlights – concise insights drawn from neuroscience, psychology, organisational studies and real-world reports that connect lived experience with wider evidence and context.

Before you leave Part One

The system will always reward what keeps it running, but wholeness begins when you start noticing what keeps *you* alive inside it. Every day brings small moments to choose awareness over autopilot, to pause before saying yes, to sense what your body already knows, and to hear the truth beneath the noise. These are the first quiet acts of reclaiming yourself.

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You don't need to leave the system to find freedom. The work begins right where you are: in the tension between performance and presence and in the space between what's rewarded and what's right for you. The smallest act of awareness – a breath before a reply, a question before compliance – can change the quality of how you show up.

Before you turn the page, take a breath. Notice where the system shows up in you: in the rush to please, in the silence before a meeting or in the pride that hides fatigue. Notice what stings and what softens. These are your signals. They show you where survival still runs the show and where something in you is ready to lead differently.

In Part Two, we'll look beneath those signals to the hidden beliefs that once helped you cope but now quietly keep you small. You don't need to be tougher to thrive in demanding systems; you need to be truer. And truth always begins with noticing.

PART TWO

BELIEFS THAT MAKE US SURVIVE

Most of us don't burn out in a single blaze. We slowly erode. One unspoken no. One late-night push. One meeting where you swallow your truth to keep the peace. Day by day, you hold it together for everyone else until you realise you've drifted away from yourself amid your own success. We begin here with the quiet unravelling – the point at which success starts to cost more than it should.

Coping doesn't look like failure; it looks like professionalism. Calm in the storm. Dependable under pressure. The rewards are promotions, pay rises and a reputation for 'handling anything'. But your body keeps score – the clenched jaw, the lack of sleep, the Monday dread that starts on Sunday. These aren't flaws to fix; they're messages. Quiet reminders that something in you wants to be heard.

Part Two tells the truth of that survival – the invisible ways we learn to cope, belong and keep performing even as we thin out inside. You don't need to work at a 'bad' company to feel the weight. Most systems prize steadiness over honesty and output over awareness. Those rewards train you to stay protected long after the pressure has passed.

I'll begin by discussing how coping became my identity and what it cost me. Then we'll name the survival beliefs that keep so many of us looping the same patterns. They're not personal failings but learned adaptations – cultural and systemic scripts we've inherited, rewarded and repeated.

You'll meet the six beliefs I have seen most often, first in myself, then across three decades of corporate life, and in the leaders I coach. They show up so consistently that I built the **Wholeness at Work Self-Assessment** to help you notice where they may be shaping you. It explores four dimensions where these patterns leave their mark: **Integrity** (felt alignment), **Resilience** (recovery, not endurance), **Voice** (truth with boundaries), and **Presence** (staying connected in the moment).

This isn't a test or a quick-fix toolkit. It's a mirror. Awareness is the first repair. Until you see clearly, choice is theoretical. So, as you read, notice what stings. Which sentences do you want to skim over? That isn't weakness; it's an invitation to pay attention.

Remember: these beliefs don't live only in your mind; they live in your body. Each belief carries a kind of muscle memory – it's how your nervous system learned to stay safe in fast, demanding environments. Being able to see them isn't just changing thought patterns; it's recognising how they echo through your reactions today.

In Part One, you traced the system and the rhythm that shapes us. Now, as you enter Part Two, turn that lens inwardly. What beliefs have been holding your rhythm hostage? Notice → Anchor → Choose → Return – begin here with Notice.

Pause before you turn the page. Notice what's already shifting.