

Advance Praise

"Love is foundational to wisdom. Love is the force that binds us together and requires an active choice to create a better world. Rumi, the Thirteenth Century philosopher and poet, is fortunate in his latest expositor. Author Chris Parker gently presents and applies the timeless wisdom of Rumi to shape the future of leadership with empathy and authenticity."

- AMY C. EDMONDSON, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, Harvard Business School, and Author of Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well

"Lead from Love with Rumi is an essential guide for anyone looking to reinvent themselves with inspiration from the timeless wisdom of Rumi. This book provides profound insights on leading with compassion and authenticity, helping individuals navigate today's complexities with an authentically heart-centered approach. By reflecting on Rumi's teachings, Parker inspires us to foster meaningful and impactful relationships, transforming our professional lives from the inside out."

- CHIP CONLEY New York Times Bestselling Author and Founder of the Modern Elder Academy

"As an entrepreneur and a leader, I've learned more from the 13th-century mystic poet Rumi than from all of the modern business books I've read combined; but now, in this book, author Chris Parker offers a simple yet powerful distillation of Rumi's wisdom for a business context, and the result is a genuinely beautiful book that teaches as much about life and love as business and leadership... although in the end, what's the difference anyway?"

- BRIAN J ROBERTSON Founder of Holacracy

"Lead with Love offers bite-size chunks of wisdom! For everyone who is looking for inspiration to approach leadership in a different way."

- JEROEN DE FLANDER Bestselling Author of The Art of Performance

“This book invites you to fully embrace who you aspire to be and to inspire others from a place of love, intelligence, and spiritual depth. It provides words to what lies deeply within you, helping you recognize and express your potential to lead from love. By guiding you on a journey to self-realization, the book encourages you to create ripples of positive impact in the world around you. Ultimately, it challenges you to find the courage to live authentically and lead with love, fostering a better world for everyone.”

- **KAREN DE BOECK** Lean/Agile Coach and Adjugo Partner

“In ‘Lead from Love with Rumi’, Chris Parker rediscovers what it is to be human and what that means for our behavior as leaders, followers, and inhabitants of the world. A must-read for anyone caught between the conflicting forces of working life: the need to perform, office politics, and the wish to find a purpose.”

- **SIMON BROD** Movement Teacher, Strategy Advisor and Poet

“Chris keeps surprising me with fresh perspectives on leadership and organizational growth. When he told me about his plan to incorporate love into the leadership equation, it felt like a natural progression in his journey as both a person and a leader. This book delves into the importance of doing what you love with the people you care about, and through it, Chris invites you to explore this often underestimated facet of modern leadership.”

- **WIM LUBBERSEN** Management Consultant and B&B Owner

“There are countless books on successful and conscious leadership, but ‘Lead from Love with Rumi’ captures the essence of what leaders and individuals should aspire to in their careers and lives. It is not just another guide to success, but a heartfelt invitation to embark on a new journey – one that starts within. This book seamlessly connects the desire for divine love with the challenges of the business world. Leadership becomes an opportunity to inspire others by embracing a deep love for humanity. ‘Lead from Love with Rumi’ reminds us that the world needs more leaders who lead for the sake of love, not just for success.”

- **DANIELA HOFBAUER** HR Manager and Career Coach

"The most important driver of employee engagement is the extent to which employees believe their leaders have a sincere interest in their wellbeing. Caring and connection is the recipe for success that Chris Parker shares in 'Lead From Love With Rumi.' Packed with simple lessons, this book will transform your approach to leading with heart."

- **STAN PHELPS CSP** Author of the Goldfish Series of Books

"'Lead from Love with Rumi' is a kind invitation to expand our consciousness to reflect love inspired, compassionate leadership; A gentle guide to awaken the essence of our specific life purpose, embody our soul and make it visible in the world so that we can truly lead and live the life that we came to experience and wholeheartedly belong."

- **JYOTISH PATEL** Wholeness Guide, Facilitator of Transformation

"'Lead from Love with Rumi' is not just a leadership manual; it's a guide to personal and professional transformation. It challenges leaders to rethink their approach to power, encouraging a shift from traditional hierarchical models to more inclusive, empathetic and embodied styles of leadership."

- **CHARLOTTE MADER** Executive Coach & Mindfulness Instructor

"'Lead from Love with Rumi' by Chris Parker takes readers on a powerful journey to discover the essence of true leadership through the lens of Rumi's timeless poetry. One of my favorite quotes of Rumi is "If everything around seems dark, look again, you may be the light." Chris masterfully uses this quote to illustrate that in times of struggle or uncertainty, the solutions often lie within us. Instead of seeking external validation or fearing the unknown, this book calls us to turn inward and find our own light – using it to face adversity and act with compassion. Chris blends Rumi's profound wisdom with practical leadership insights, making this a book I would recommend to anyone aiming to lead wholeheartedly."

- **DOROTA KLOP-SOWINSKA** Executive Career Coach and Author of Career Jump! How to Successfully Change your Professional Path

"Anyone who has had the opportunity to meet Chris Parker in person will quickly realize that his invitation to embark on the 'Love Journey' is not a cover for weakness or a shield for his own fears and anxieties. With the physical presence of a U.S. football player and a sharp, witty intellect, Chris's embrace of love is far from a defense mechanism of a fragile personality. His invitation is compelling, made even more so by the fact that his life story clearly shows he practices what he preaches. I am honored to call him a friend, mentor, and business partner!"

- DIDIER MARLIER Enablers Network Partner

"Chris Parker successfully translates and elaborates the wisdom and poetry from Rumi in inspiring views and approaches for those who have the privilege to lead others in business or elsewhere. At the core, the book makes clear that leadership comes from the heart, from love. It starts with connecting with your own heart and spirit, with the goodness in yourself as well as your pain - then to the hearts of your fellows in your team, company, etc. True leadership engages, stimulates, inspires, enlightens - this can only be based on love. A baseline that Chris takes further in many aspects of modern business leadership, creating stimulating guidelines for making work and life 'in the Office' to a playful, engaging and positive environment for business-, social- and spiritual growth."

- GERPHIL KERKHOF Therapist and Coach

"In 'Lead from Love with Rumi', Chris Parker invites you to have a different look on leadership. In a special way - which love always is - it inspires you to have the courage to be who you are for yourself and also towards others. One of the best things about this book is that you can open it to one of the hundred essays to be inspired and to understand the purpose why you opened that page. As an author myself, I know how uncomfortable and vulnerable you can feel during the whole process. When you read this book, you will also experience how Chris embraced those feelings in an act of self-leadership from love."

- JESSICA VAN BEEK Qhuba Sustainability Consultant and Beekeeper

LEAD FROM LOVE WITH RUMI

The word "eshgh" (عشق) is a Persian (Farsi) word that translates to "love" in English. It specifically refers to a deep, passionate, and intense form of love, often with connotations of spiritual or divine love. This word in Persian is included on the cover of the book to show respect to the history and origin of the poetry that inspired the essays.

Rumi primarily wrote his masterpieces in Persian; however, he also wrote in Arabic, Turkish and Greek. In standard Arabic, the same word (عشق) is translated to "eshq" and has a similar depth of meaning, often evoking the notion of an overwhelming, all-encompassing love that transcends mere affection and enters the realm of spiritual and mystical devotion.

LEAD FROM LOVE WITH RUMI



**100 Insights for Leaders to
Harness the Power of Compassion,
Connection and Creativity**

CHRIS PARKER

Lead from Love with Rumi

100 Insights for Leaders to Harness the Power of Compassion, Connection and Creativity

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This book contains excerpts from English translations of the poetry of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī. These excerpts are used in accordance with the fair use doctrine for purposes of commentary, criticism, and scholarly discussion. Only portions of the poems are included, rather than complete works, to provide context and enhance the thematic exploration within this book. See the 'About Translations' section for more information.

The essays are inspired by various business and personal development themes, concepts and practices that are outlined in the 'Sources of Concepts and Methods' section.

This book was edited using advanced artificial intelligence tools. While AI technology was employed to enhance the editing process, all interpretations and applications presented in this work are entirely original and solely created by the author.

Special editions of this book are possible with custom covers and forewords by special guests or company executives. For information about special discounts for bulk purchase and customizing versions of the book for company gifts or for information on booking the author for an event, please visit our website at www.ebullient.com/leadfromlove/.

For Melanie

While we met at work and fell in love,
this is not the kind of love this book is about...



The profound relationship between Shams of Tabriz and Rumi is one of the most significant spiritual partnerships in history. Shams, a wandering dervish, met Rumi in 1244 and their bond transformed Rumi from a respected scholar into a passionate poet and mystic. Shams' unconventional teachings and deep spiritual insights inspired Rumi to delve into the mysteries of divine love and inner transformation.

This encounter ignited a profound internal journey for Rumi, leading to his creation of some of the world's most cherished mystical poetry. A book inspired by Rumi would be incomplete without highlighting the important influence of this relationship.

East, west, south, or north makes little difference.
No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every
journey, a journey within.
If you travel within, you'll visit the whole full world and
beyond.

- SHAMS of TABRIZ

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The earliest memory I have of a manager leading from what I now call love is Tom Carey. Tom shared with me the wisdom to connect people to the work they are most passionate about and then, as a manager, to support them when truly necessary. This simple yet profound approach has stayed with me throughout my career and serves as a foundational principle in this book.

In more recent years, the journey mixed my search for simplicity with deep personal development was triggered through work with Inès Gaston-Echeverria (inesgaston.com). It was through her guidance that I encountered the transformative insights of Abraham Hicks.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Jyotish Patel for his exceptional energy coaching (jyotishpatel.com). His guidance has profoundly influenced my understanding of personal energy and its impact on leadership. Moreover, his sharing the teachings of Dr. Joe Dispenza opened new avenues of thought and practice, enriching the concepts explored in this book.

Additionally, I extend my deepest gratitude to Gerphil Kerkhof for his life coaching (essentialwaves.nl), which provided invaluable guidance and support, helping me navigate the complexities of balancing personal growth with professional aspirations.

Special recognition is due to my collaborator networks of Enablers, Qhuba, and Adjugo, who have been instrumental in bringing this book to life.

From Enablers (enablersnetwork.com), a special thanks to Charlotte Mader, whose steadfast accountability kept me on track during the final stages of this project. Her encouragement and support were invaluable in crossing the finish line. I am deeply grateful to the Qhuba team (qhuba.com) – Jessica van Beek, Simon Brod, Wim Lubbersen, and Wouter Hasekamp. Their collective wisdom and insights have enriched my understanding of the world immeasurably. Similarly, the Adjugo (adjugo.com) team led by Karen De Boeck and

Chris Verlinden deserves special mention. Their engaging spirit and dedication to cultivating positive change in their journey have been a beacon of inspiration throughout this process.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Jeroen De Flander (jeroen-de-flander.com), whose sage advice steered the focus of this book. He encouraged me to stretch further into the "why" of leadership, rather than just the mechanics of management. His perspective inspired me to rethink the shape and core message of this work.

Vahid Daemi, the former CEO of LeasePlan (now ayvens.com), has been a pillar of faith and support over the years. His belief in me has been unwavering, and it was his suggestion to study Rumi's teachings on love that provided the profound source of inspiration for this book. Vahid's influence and encouragement have been pivotal in my journey as a leader.

A special thanks to Mohamed Elmasry, Mohammad Hassan, and the Tactful AI team (tactful.ai) in Egypt. Their embodiment of leading from love in their work and interactions has been a powerful example. Their experiences and insights have deeply informed the concepts explored in this book, including the weaving of religious beliefs into leadership as shared by Rumi long ago.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Rumi himself, whose timeless wisdom has been a guiding light on this journey of leading from love. I am particularly thankful to Coleman Barks, whose masterful interpretations have made Rumi's teachings accessible to a broader audience.

To all who have been part of this journey, your contributions, whether large or small, have been invaluable. This book is as much a reflection of your influence as it is of my own efforts. Thank you for your continued support and for believing in the vision of leading from love.

Foreword

First and foremost, Chris's interpretation and exploration of Rumi's poetry and its profound message are both extensive and thought-provoking. It is evident that he has endeavored – and succeeded – in moving beyond the superficial, delving deeply into the spiritual aspects of Rumi's teachings.

Furthermore, his application of the principles of love to leadership and business emerges from a genuine desire to incorporate love into his daily professional activities. I believe he has achieved this integration with sincerity and purpose. True humanity encompasses love, and love, in turn, can permeate every aspect of one's life.

During a lunch with Chris in London discussing his book ambitions, we discussed the concept of love and how it might be applied to daily life. I suggested that he might find inspiration in the poetry and writings of the great Persian Sufi poet, Rumi. I have always found Rumi's work to be both inspiring and deeply resonant with the message of spiritual love for humanity.

Later, I was pleased to learn that Chris had indeed incorporated Rumi's poetry into his book about leading from love. Initially, I must admit, I was curious – and somewhat skeptical – about how the concepts of business leadership and spiritual love could be reconciled. Although modern leadership theories emphasize the importance of caring for people and society, I could not envision how love could be woven into this framework.

As Chris himself acknowledges, the discovery of love and its application to leadership is a journey. He has taken significant and inspiring steps toward this goal, and his work serves as a guide for others on this path. I highly recommend this book to all readers who wish to participate in a journey of self-discovery and love.

- VAHID DAEMI

Preface

‘Leading from Love with Rumi’ is a study into the possibilities of love being a foundation for leadership. It serves as a reflection of my own journey, an exploration of how these powerful forces can intertwine and elevate each other. This is not because I have mastered this approach in life... but because I aspire to this reality. The path of leading from love is one I am still walking, learning, and evolving with each step. I hope that through this exploration, I can share with you the transformative potential I have glimpsed.

I have come to understand that leadership transcends the confines of traditional management science. My career in management and coaching has shown me that true leadership encompasses more than intellectual prowess and strategic acumen. It involves an emotional and spiritual depth that connects us to our teams and our mission in profound ways. The insights in this book are distilled from years of observing, learning, and growing in roles that challenged me to lead with mind, body and soul.

In crafting this book, I have consciously avoided including anecdotes or stories. Such narratives often trigger judgment and opinion, which can distract from the core message. Instead, I have left the application of these principles up to you, the reader. I trust that you will find your own unique ways to integrate these insights into your life and work.

As with any leader, I have benefited from the wisdom and guidance of mentors and teachers along the way. The essays are standing on the shoulders of these giants and my deep desire is this work becomes a symbol of respect and appreciation for these inspirational guides such as Rumi and others listed at in the appendix.

My desire is that this book continues to inspire me when I need a reminder that leading from love is always available. Whether in moments of triumph or challenge, the principles explored here are a source of guidance and strength. They remind me that love is not a

passive force but an active, dynamic approach to leadership that can transform our interactions and outcomes.

The first part of the book is a short introduction on how to lead from love and is recommended to understand the context of leadership and love as applied in the essays. The following parts of the book are the 100 essays. While the essays are grouped by topic, my dream when preparing the book is that I will pick it up in the future and open to any of the essays at random and be inspired by what the universe has to offer.

I believe you will find inspiration too. As you read, I encourage you to open your heart and mind to the possibilities that leading from love can bring. Let this book be a companion on your journey, a reminder that the power of love is always within reach, ready to guide you through every decision and interaction. May it inspire you to lead with compassion, courage, and authenticity, and to create a ripple effect of positive change in your organization and beyond.

From love,

- CHRIS PARKER

You are invited to share your reflections and feedback! Please visit the following website: www.ebullient.com/leadfromlove/.

The Business Simplicity Podcast includes episodes with Chris Parker having conversations with leaders from around the world about their favorite Rumi quote and how it inspires them.

Connect on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/simplychrisparker/>



LEAD FROM LOVE WITH RUMI

Introducing Leading From Love

LEAD FROM LOVE WITH RUMI

At its essence, love transcends the surface and reaches into the depths of the human spirit, removing barriers that disconnect us from our inner source of truth and beauty. It binds us to our most authentic selves, lighting our path with clarity and compassion.

In leadership, love becomes a guiding force, much like a lighthouse offering hope and anticipation. While fear or coercion may yield temporary results, they come at a significant cost. In contrast, love fosters genuine connection and unwavering support, leading to true greatness. Leaders who lead with love cultivate environments where trust and respect thrive, enabling teams to surpass their limits and achieve extraordinary outcomes.

Love is an endless source of energy, fueling authentic connections and nurturing a space where creativity and innovation flourish. This clarity allows for decisions that are both intelligent and compassionate.

Leadership, at its core, is about providing support and direction. It is the art of inspiring and guiding others to reach their highest potential. Great leaders know that true leadership is not about wielding power but about empowering others to discover their own strengths. When grounded in love, this leadership style creates a ripple effect, spreading positivity and fostering a culture of growth and collaboration.

Leadership emerges from self-love

Leading from love begins with leading yourself. Self-love is the foundation of authentic leadership. A leader cannot truly lead others from love without first loving themselves – this means accepting both strengths and flaws, understanding personal needs and desires, and finding peace with one's journey. When a

leader loves themselves, they exude a calm confidence that others naturally trust and follow.

Effective leadership also respects the unique journey of each team member. Leaders who lead from love recognize the individual talents and aspirations of their team, offering encouragement and support that empowers others to reach their full potential – leaving a lasting impact that shapes both careers and lives. True leaders engage with the person beneath the behavior, recognizing the inherent worth and potential within each individual. They address challenges with compassion and wisdom, crafting solutions that honor the humanity of everyone involved.

What you pay attention to grows

What you choose to focus on significantly shapes the outcomes you experience. It's often said that we find what we expect. If you've already decided that a task will be hard, you'll likely encounter more obstacles and problems. However, if you decide it will be easy, solutions begin to reveal themselves through the power of synchronicity. This isn't magic – it's the product of mindset and awareness. The reality you create as a leader is deeply tied to the expectations you set.

Mindset serves as the foundation for everything. A leader's thoughts and beliefs shape not only their personal reality but also the environment for those they lead. When you focus on potential, solutions, and success, you nurture an atmosphere where possibilities emerge effortlessly. On the contrary, when you dwell on difficulty or failure, you create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where challenges grow and dominate your experience. Your energy follows your attention, and where that attention goes, growth follows – be it in the form of opportunity or obstacle.

LEAD FROM LOVE WITH RUMI

There's a delicate paradox a leader must navigate: the expectation of fostering greatness in others while not seeking validation or love in return. This balance requires a deep understanding of human nature and a commitment to unconditional support and growth. It's about holding the space for each individual to grow into their best version while not depending on their approval or admiration. When you are aligned with your own true self, clarity in decision-making follows naturally. In this space of self-security, you lead from a place of integrity, creating an environment where others can also find themselves.

Security, wholeness, and wellness in leadership come from being in sync with your own being. When you are aligned internally, your external actions reflect this balance, creating harmony within your team. As a leader, your role is to stay connected to this inner truth, holding the intention for others to grow while trusting that their journey will unfold in its own time. Leading from this place of clarity encourages the team to thrive and perform at their highest potential.

Tension is necessary and welcome

Tensions and conflicts arise in business, just like in any relationship, and this contrast gives us insights into what to invest further into and what needs to change. These moments of friction are not to be feared but embraced as opportunities for growth and deeper understanding. A leader who leads from love approaches conflict with an open mind and a compassionate heart, seeking to understand the root causes and find solutions that honor the needs and aspirations of all involved.

Avoiding conflict is not leading from love; it is, in fact, a form of avoidance that stifles growth. Leading with love means having the courage to confront uncomfortable situations with clarity and

grace, knowing that true leadership involves fostering an environment where discomfort is transformed into dialogue, and tension becomes a gateway to discovery. Without conflict, we miss the opportunity to learn, both about ourselves and others. Through friction, we gain a deeper understanding of different perspectives, sharpen our problem-solving skills, and evolve as individuals and as a team.

One of the primary functions of a business organization is to offer individuals the gift of conflict as a source of inspiration and growth. Conflict forces us to re-examine our assumptions, refine our ideas, and innovate solutions that wouldn't have surfaced in a perfectly harmonious environment. When seen through this lens, conflict is not something to dread but a critical part of the creative process. It fuels development, innovation, and the evolution of both the individual and the collective.

Leaders who understand this invite tension and conflict into the conversation, not as disruptions, but as necessary ingredients for progress. By creating a safe space where team members can express dissenting views, raise concerns, or question decisions, leaders foster a culture of openness, trust, and respect. In this environment, teams are encouraged to lean into discomfort, knowing that growth often lies just beyond the edge of what is familiar or comfortable.

Conflict, approached with love and empathy, can also deepen relationships. It provides an opportunity to truly see and understand one another. When we resolve conflict through dialogue that honors each individual's perspective, we strengthen the bonds of trust within the team. It creates a foundation where individuals feel valued for their unique contributions and are motivated to bring their full selves to the table.

The key is not to shy away from tension but to embrace it as a powerful teacher. When a leader frames conflict as an