

How to Create Habitats for Everyone to Flourish

13 Forward Thinking Insights from an
interview with Claude Cloutier, CEO,
XtremeEDA



Meet Claude Cloutier

Claude is the President, CEO, and Founder at XtremeEDA and Owner, CJC Consulting Ltd. He is also the author of The Consciousness Quotient: Leadership and Social Justice for the 21st Century.

In this presentation, I present the 13 most intriguing insights I discovered in my interview with Claude. Read the full interview at Create Habitats for Everyone to Flourish.

— **Bill Fox, Founder, Forward Thinking Workplaces**



13 Forward-Thinking Insights

How to Create Habitats for Everyone to Flourish

1. We Need to Redefine the Purpose of an Organization
2. Reorient Organizations Towards Serving Society
3. Create Habitats for People to Flourish
4. Organizations Are Incredibly Dependent on Their Habitat
5. Full Attention and Best Performance Are About Alignment
6. An Opportunity to Bring their Greatest Creative Potential
7. A Habitat that Allows People to Make a Positive Difference
8. How Can I Serve You Better?
9. I Ask Them All The Time. It's Just Part Of The Culture.
10. What Can You Do To Help Me Flourish?
11. How Will We Be with Each Other?
12. Three Key Takeaways I'd Like Readers to Get from *The Consciousness Quotient*
13. What's the Nature of Judgment and Non-Judgment?

Question 1: How can we create workplaces where every voice matters, everyone thrives and finds meaning, and change and innovation happen naturally?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #1

We Need to Redefine the Purpose of an Organization

We need to redefine the purpose of an organization since most corporations have corrupted things. You can see it in the writings of how we've taught MBAs in the past. Their mantra is that the purpose of a corporation is to maximize shareholder value. That speaks to corruption of purpose because profit is something that results from a value proposition. We're looking at it from the wrong end. We're looking at it from an outcome rather than what goes into that. What that orientation has done is it's caused capitalism to exploit and abuse people, and rape the planet. For example, look at our fish stocks, open-pit mines, and all the other environmental degradation.



FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #2

Reorient Organizations Towards Serving Society

If the purpose of an organization is reoriented towards serving society, and serving society means creating healthy habitats for all. Then those organizations that would abuse, exploit, or otherwise rape the planet would be sanctioned heavily by society. Part of shifting the ideas around why organizations exist in the first place is shifting the role of leadership and being stewards of that purpose. And ensuring that how we go about creating that value is good for the people and good for the planet. It's an enormous shift in thought and beliefs.



FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #3

Create Habitats for People to Flourish

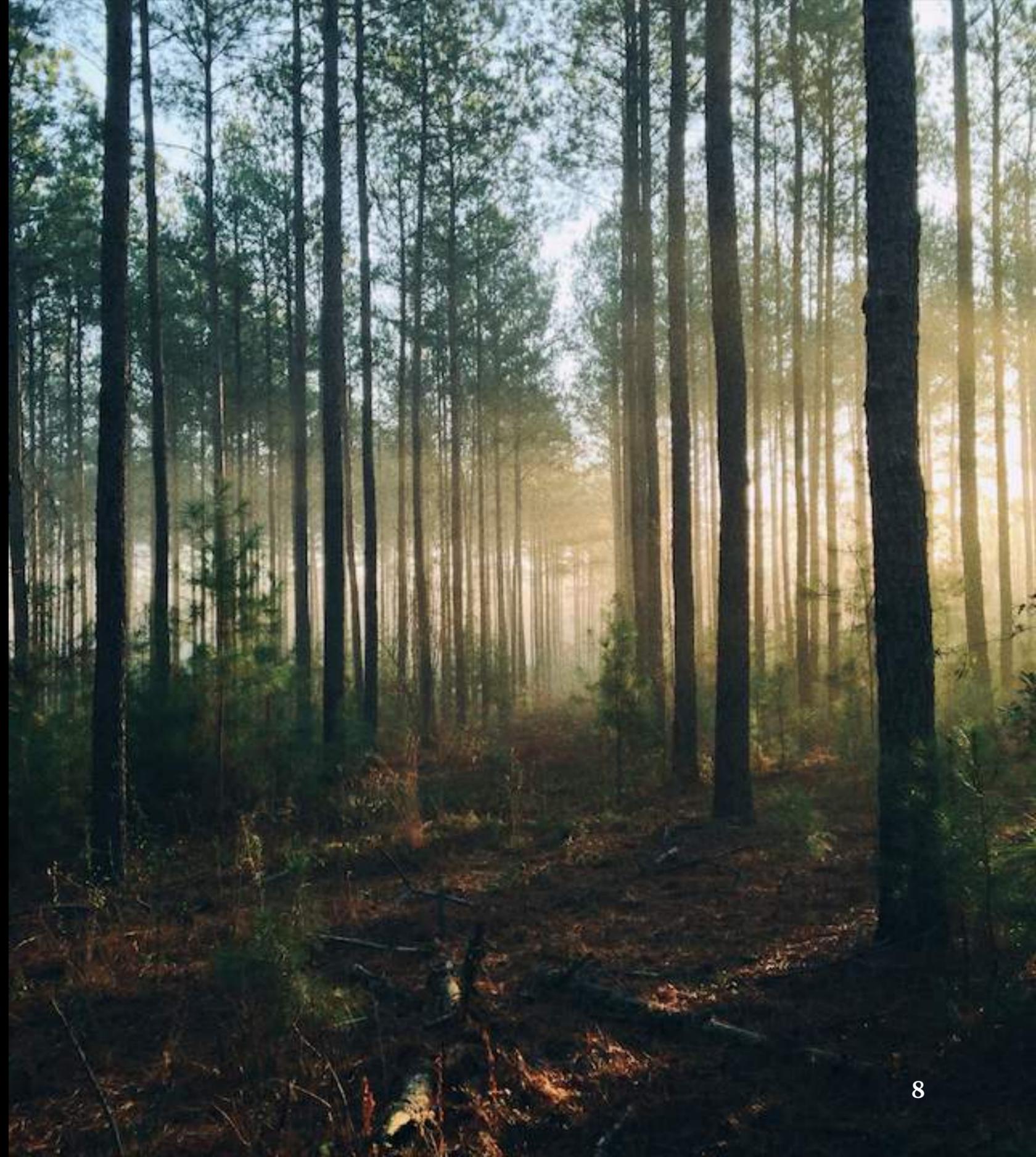
I see one of my roles as a CEO as creating the best habitat I can for the people who work here to flourish both personally and professionally. That means protecting them against abusive clients because we are consulting company, and we do that all the time, by the way. It means that I care about the people and their lives and their families. I'm concerned to ensure that they can have a great personal life as well. And while their personal life is not my business per se, it's naive to think that those stakeholders, family members, do not significantly influence the organization and vice versa.



FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #4

Organizations Are Incredibly Dependent on Their Habitat

When you look at existing organizations, especially in the West, they tend to control things given their evolution. They create a hard boundary, and this is true legally and financially. There is a rigid boundary by which we measure the organization. But the truth of the matter is that organizations are open systems. And they're incredibly dependent on their habitat, just like people are dependent on the natural habitat and all the other animals are dependent on the natural habitat. One of the shifts we need is to ensure is that organizations don't degrade the habitat, both inside and outside of themselves, in some manner. If we're mindful of that, I believe that you're going to see much higher levels of engagement because what we're fundamentally doing is we're aligning.



Question 2: What does it take to get an employee's full attention and best performance?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #5

Full Attention and Best Performance Are About Alignment

For me, it's about alignment – horizontal and vertical. The vertical is about aligning the high-level purpose of the organization with the individual's values. That aligns the heart. The horizontal is about aligning the individual's strengths with the work to be done. That aligns the head. The other aspect is the alignment of leadership's purpose(s). A servant-leader approach is one of care. It essentially provides ongoing answers to how a leader can help the individual flourish.



*Question 3: What do people really lack
and long for at work?*

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #6

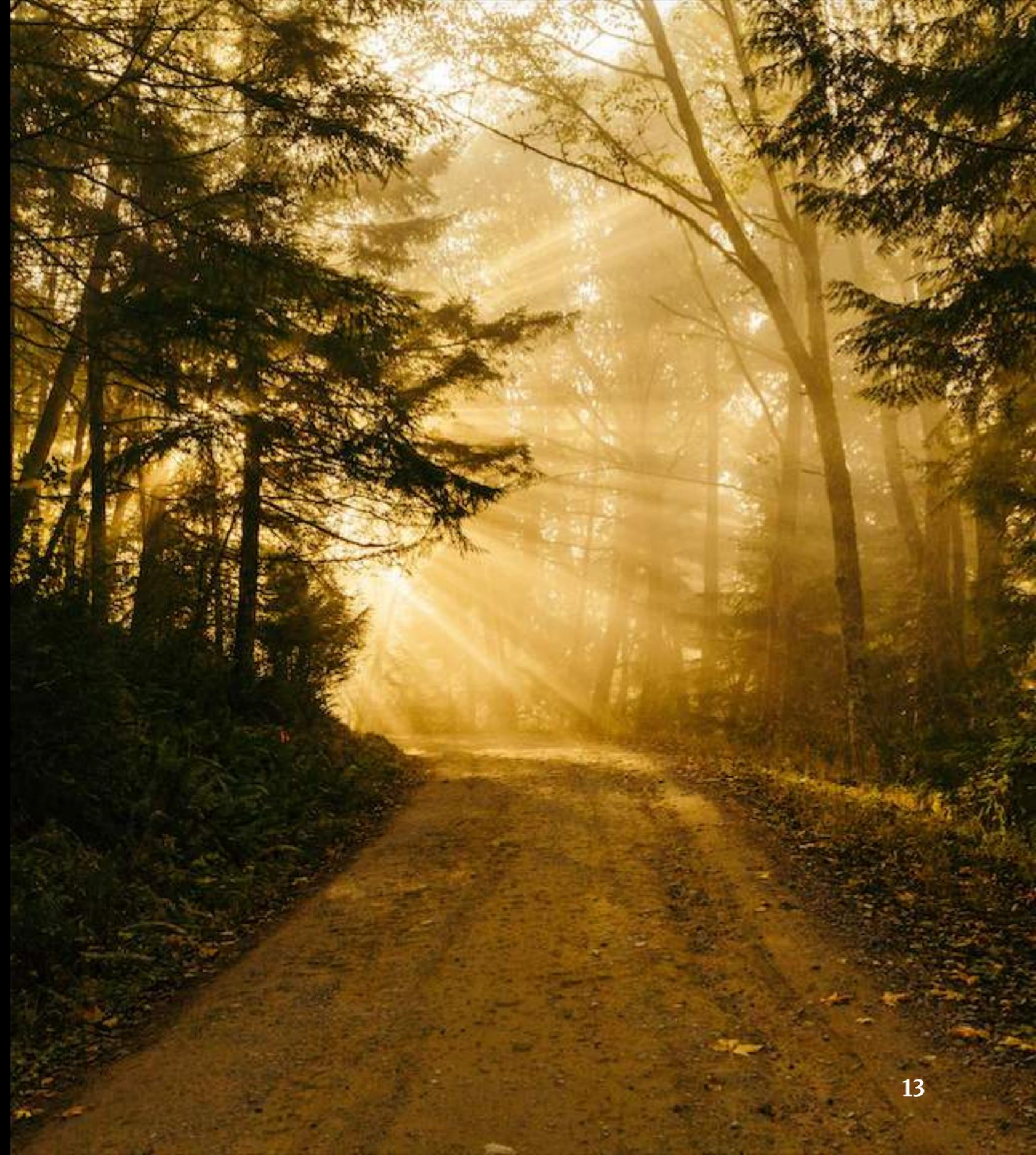
An Opportunity to Bring their Greatest Creative Potential

In short, to have the opportunity to bring their greatest creative potential to whatever it is they're doing. I firmly believe that people exist to achieve their soulful purpose on Earth. We can get back to this problem with the west of dropping even the concept of a soul, but I believe that many people are most joyful when creating things.

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #7

A Habitat that Allows People to Make a Positive Difference

And what they long for? is the habitat that allows them to do that and make a positive difference in the world — that their work matters. If you look at the outcome of what you're creating, you see it as the most beautiful thing in the world. There's an aesthetic value, not just the form and function, but a true aesthetic value. A computer engineer will create a circuit and will say, "Wow. That's beautiful!" Or the Greeks would create the Parthenon and say, "Wow, that's beautiful!" DaVinci created the Mona Lisa, and people go, "Wow. That's beautiful!"

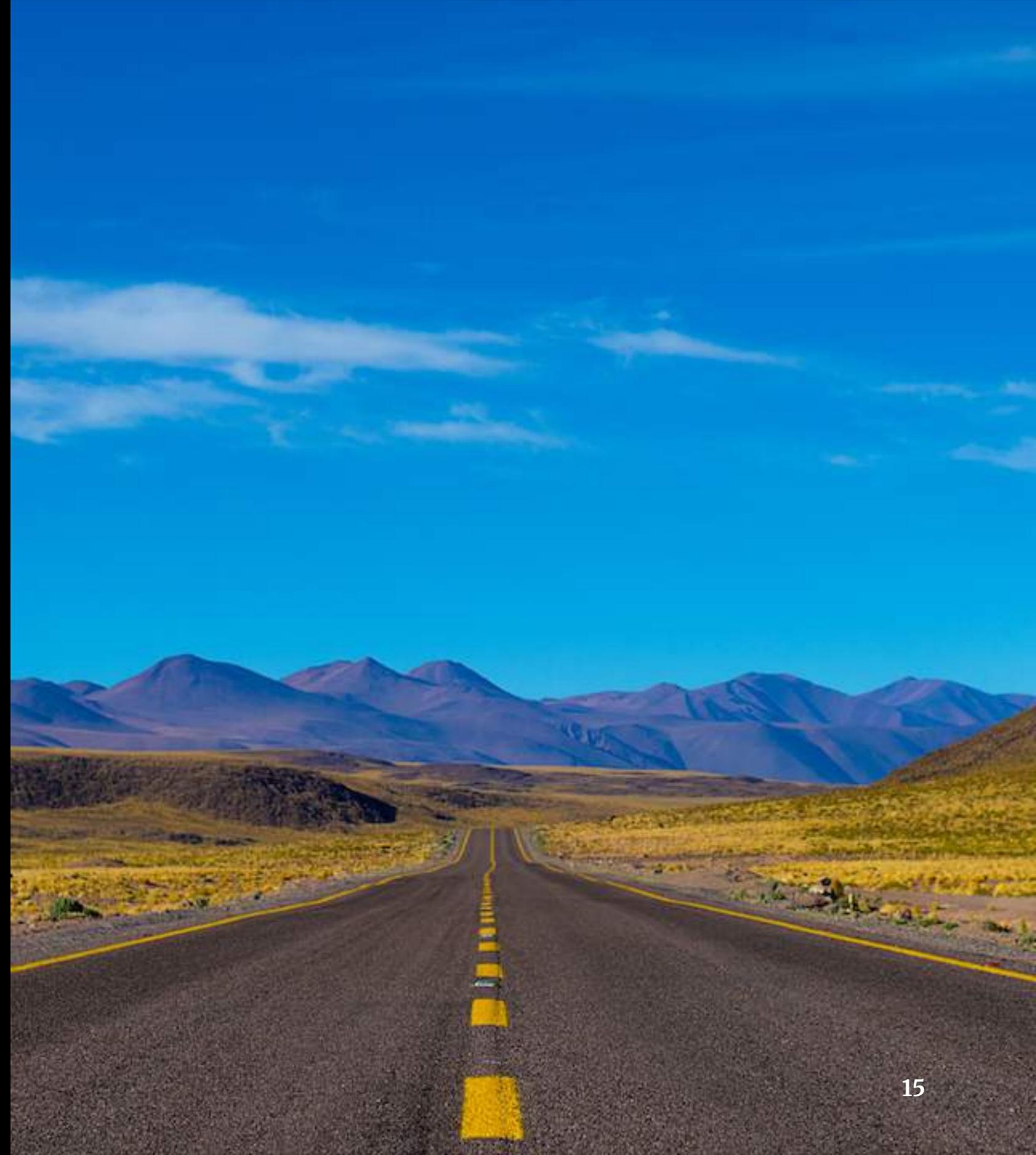


Question 4: What is the most important question leaders should ask employees?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #8

How Can I Serve You Better?

How can I serve you better? Simple, isn't it? What does that say about power? For example? It turns it upside down or at least equalizes the power differential. Once it's equalized, it has the potential to go anywhere. In other words, the outcome is not predetermined. If the leader says, here's what you can do for me and doesn't allow the employee to ask the same question, then it's already predetermined what will happen.



Question 6: As a CEO, did you have the opportunity to ask your employees those types of questions?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #9

I Ask Them All The Time. It's Just Part Of The Culture.

In my welcoming interview, I say, "Look, I'm here to serve you. I'm here to create that habitat where you can flourish personally and professionally." I'm very clear about it. My obligation is to do my best to create that habitat. Your obligation is to tell me what that is because it's different for everybody, so my door is always open because the answer also changes over time. So my role is the steward of the habitat and to protect those individuals from abuse of clients. I'm the chief interface to the external environment. So my management team, who share in these values, consistently defend employees from more traditional capitalistic organizations.



Question 7: What is the most important question employees should ask leaders?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #10

What Can You Do To Help Me Flourish?

The answer just turns around. What can you do to help me flourish? People have this concept of CEOs being all-powerful, and they do have a lot of power. However, we're a lot more constrained than people realize. There are a lot of laws and regulations that the existing system has created to handcuff CEOs. Particularly public companies especially. We can only do so much, and I can only do whatever is in my power to do. Given our limited resources, we are a very small company. If you feel you need to flourish elsewhere because you can't do it here, that's a good reason to leave, and I'm okay with that.



Question 8: What is the most important question we should ask ourselves?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #11

How Will We Be With Each Other?

How we will be with each other cuts to the idea of the organizational culture. It's a choice. There is some free will available, but basically, it answers the question of, "Will we treat each other with dignity and respect? Will abuse of power be tolerated?" And conversely, the employee also must answer that question. Will you treat others with dignity and respect? Just how are you going to be in the moment? This speaks to seeing each other and valuing each other for who we are. It's no different in the workplace because it's all about relationships.



*Question 9: What are the top takeaways you'd like readers to get from your book *The Consciousness Quotient*?*

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #12

Three Key Takeaways I'd Like Readers To Get From *The Consciousness Quotient*.

- » What do you believe and why do you believe it because you can't make any transformational changes without questioning your beliefs and worldview.
- » Self-awareness, your Consciousness Quotient (CQ), is key to leadership. What is your brain doing right now even as you read this?
- » How will you be with yourself and others?

I'm not asking people to believe what I believe. I'm asking them to question what they believe. Take, for example, the Western capitalist paradigm. What do you believe about it? How much of it is unconscious within you and in your daily behaviors and so on. I can say without a doubt that there's a lot there that we don't realize.



Question 10: What question is at the heart of your book?

FORWARD-THINKING INSIGHT #13

What's The Nature Of Judgment And Non-Judgment?

Why do we polarize everything? I've answered that question for myself. It's the way our biophysics works. It's part of the material universe of positive and negative. We can't help ourselves. It's our design. The only thing we can do is realize that we're doing it every moment of our lives. And the only way that you can overcome that is to look inside and go deep and ask, "What's my brain doing in the moment? How am I judging this right now? How am I judging myself right now and letting it go and engaging not with judgment but with curiosity?"



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