

Ancient Wisdom meets Modern Leadership
to Inspire a Fresh Path Forward

THE **nomadic** MINDSET

NEVER SETTLE...for TOO LONG

KEVIN COTTAM

DIRECTION

E: globalnomadkevincottam@gmail.com

L: [linkedin.com/in/kevin-cottam/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kevin-cottam/)

W: www.thenomadicmindset.com

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PART

1

Direction

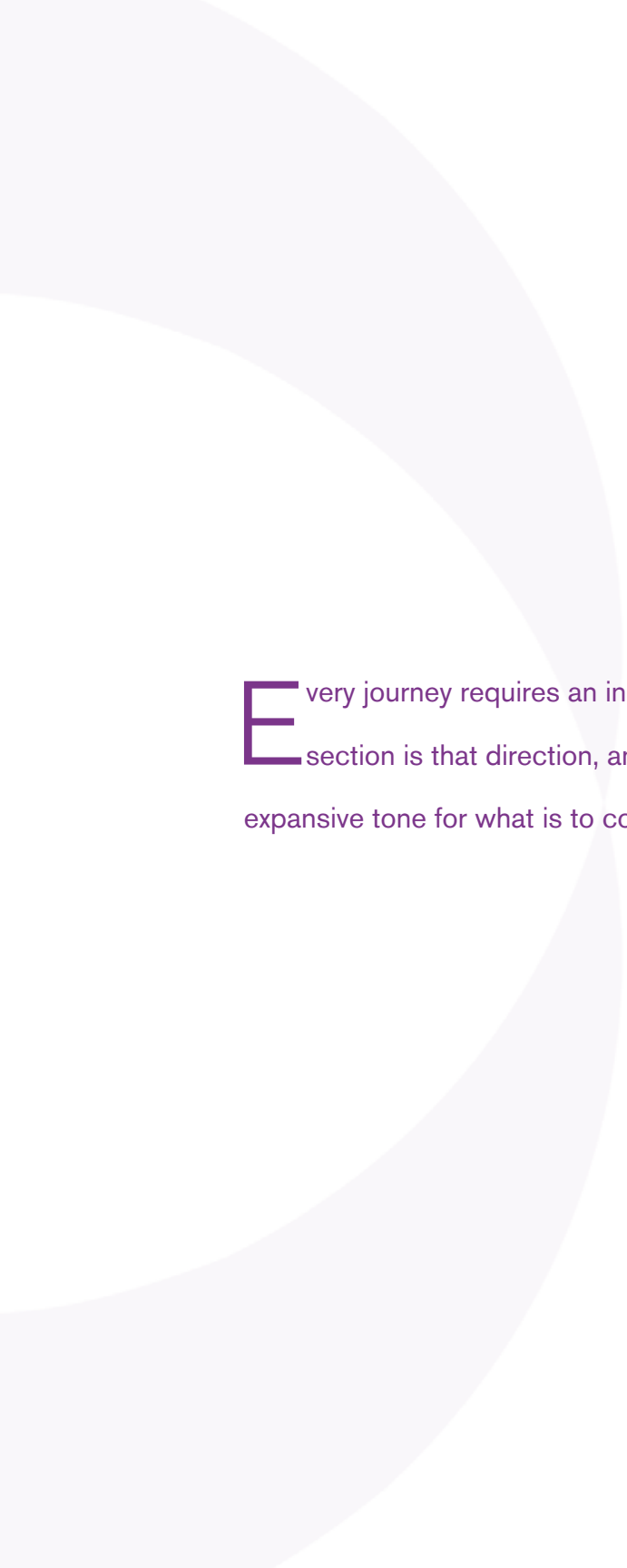
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*“Effort and courage are not enough
without purpose and direction”*

– JOHN F. KENNEDY

Photo by Kevin Cottam





Every journey requires an initial direction. This section is that direction, and it will set the expansive tone for what is to come.

Foreword

A Nomadic Epiphany

Wow! Kevin sure has had a life! He has had many a-ha moments on the way (as attested to in his first book, *Aha, Mother's Pearls*), and perhaps this latest odyssey has been his biggest. He is a modern nomad. After all, he defines the modern nomadic mindset and lifestyle and understands it from different perspectives, based on his journey of discovery in writing this book.

I suspect Kevin increasingly embraced this during his research, rediscovering himself to a certain extent and redefining how he views the world, business, and leadership. When Kevin explained the concept to me in detail, I was captivated. I immediately saw the link to the modern organisation and how different nomadic mindsets interplay in today's workplace. Intimate learnings from Berber communities, African tribes, and nomadic cultures from Morocco to Mongolia have informed this superb book, linking lessons learned to organisational culture, leadership, management, and the operation of today's global companies. A must-read for forward-looking leaders ready to think differently and less traditionally in this age of disruption and transformation.

As I read the book, I found myself transported to many of these far away cultures, rituals, and rules. I became increasingly excited as many of the lessons resonated with the challenges most leaders face today, from small/medium enterprises to large, multinational companies. This was enhanced for me through Kevin's early history and exploration of nomadic cultures, the way they operate, the way they live, and, ultimately, how the different mindsets uncovered fit like glue into the workplace of today as we tackle the undiscovered country of the #futureofwork.

The nomadic learnings that come from thousands of years of experience, evolution, survival, challenge, and change link so well to the current transformative workplace. These human skills in an increasingly digitally enabled world will bring the best out of you, your organisation, and your people.

If this all resonates, then this book is for you. It's a different take on leadership and organisation, one I feel is needed in a sea of listen-to-me titles, advisories, blogs, posts, and five-point tips for success.

Looking at leadership with a brand-new lens can open opportunity, tangible action, and personal development for leaders and aspiring managers/talent.

This book is your starting point, and Kevin is the expert to help you take that forwards personally and within your organisation. I thank him for opening my eyes as a leader and am delighted to be a part of this journey with him.

Now it's your turn! Embrace your inner nomad like I have done and learn to lead in new, compelling, and proven ways. It could be the game changer you are looking for. . . .

Jeremy Blain
Founder and CEO PerformanceWorks International



Introduction

Your Future is Now

The Nomadic Mindset™



“It is a seed of a calling and time for change . . . change is necessary for new creation . . . realising this is okay, and a little uncertainty is okay . . . change is natural, the only constant . . . think of it as an opportunity”

**– DR. SHEILA PATEL, MEDICAL DIRECTOR, MIND-BODY
MEDICAL GROUP AT THE CHOPRA CENTER, CARLSBAD, USA**

JANUARY 2018, TIGHMERT, MOROCCO

One chilly January evening at the Maison d’hôtes Nomades in Tighmert, Morocco, my photographer and I sit on the floor at a low table with a young couple from the Netherlands as we share a simple dinner of camel couscous. The room is made warm and welcoming with beautifully coloured woven carpets and pillows and yellow walls adorned with nomadic art. We talk a while, sharing stories about what we experienced in the Sahara with the nomads. The young lady says to me, “After experiencing some life with the nomads, I feel we have lost the plot on so many levels of humanity, and they seem to have it figured out.” My eyes light up and a smile covers my face. She was referring to the ancient nomadic wisdom, their qualities and mindset. Though I was fully immersed in researching *The Nomadic Mindset*™ then, this was an affirmation I was on the right track.

Leadership Problem: We Have Lost the Plot

Usually, a book starts with a desire to solve a problem, create a hero’s journey, or offer new awareness on a subject or direction. This book is no different.

With the plethora of leadership books out there, the world doesn’t need another leadership book that shares the five or seven or ten steps to successful leadership. As Dr. Patel says, “change is necessary for new creation.”

Leadership needs a serious Rethink. I believe, as do many of my colleagues in the coaching, consulting, and speaking world, that leaders are searching for something else: a fresh leadership path or framework, a different lens to see, hear, and understand things with. Why? Because something is just not working today as we enter the fast-paced, ever-changing world of Industry 4.0. What may have worked a hundred years ago, or even ten years ago, does not reflect the changing environment in organisations, politics, markets, or cultures today. A quest now exists for new answers to old problems. As Einstein so astutely said,

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

Hence, we need new mindsets today that are interconnected and aligned to values, purpose, and vision, with a focus on sustainable systems for this rapidly changing and somewhat “congested-thinking” world.

You might have noticed the world, in general, has become overwhelmingly narrow in mindset, thinking patterns, and actions. There is a growing nationalist mindset around the world, and organisations are having difficulties handling the impending disruptions, changes, and technology. Some say we are migrating

towards a precipice, especially when you consider climate change, individual behavioural changes, fake news, social and organisational culture shifts, and the rapid decline in biodiversity. Who knows? Perhaps we are.

In many ways, as the young lady from the Netherlands said, “we have lost the plot”! Have we?

A Leadership Answer

How can “we get back on plot”? One answer is to migrate to expansion. This takes a Leadership Rethink.

In this book, I propose a new path forwards. This is not your typical leadership book, rather, more of a back-to-the-future exploration. By revealing the ancient wisdom of nomads who have sustained themselves for centuries through ongoing disruption, these disruptions can be considered as seeds of a calling to some leadership answers for Industry 4.0. This, in itself, stimulates a growing awareness within and presents you with an opportunity to rethink your leadership style, behaviours, and qualities.

The Nomadic Mindset™ is a fresh, expansive-looking leadership framework path for disruptive and rapidly changing times. It is about achieving a balance between inward, narrow-focused thinking and outward, expansive-thinking. Experience the fluidity of nature that dances back and forth between narrow and expansive states of being. This awareness and fluidity can get you back on track as you adapt and migrate towards leading a more holistic and sustainable organisational culture in the contemporary world. This starts with you, the leader.

Those seeds of a calling led me to exploring the nomadic mindset. Over the course of one year, I set off to discover, not just new territories, but different mindsets—primarily the nomadic mindset. Along the way, I discovered some extra golden nuggets, the builder and settler mindsets. They are also very important as all three mindsets exist inside us all.

My experiences with Mongolian nomads, the Maasai in Kenya, and the nomads and Berbers in Southern Morocco, plus conversations with executives from startups to multinational organisations, have shaped the theme and mapping of this book. They have helped define the nomadic qualities you will find live within you, your organisation, and the whole human race. These valuable insights will have enormous significance for your organisational culture, sustainability, and leadership.

You Will Discover . . .

You may think, from the title of this book, I am referring to wandering the world discovering new territories, working nomadically in different global locations,

or learning how to work in or discover other countries. Not quite (Well, maybe a bit . . .).

My focus for this book is centered on what Batgerel Bat, Head of Secretariat for Mongolian National Branding Council, in Mongolia told me. She said, “People think nomad means physical movement from place to place to find new and better pastures to graze. No, nomad means the movement of the mind.”

The nomad of the mind is a metaphor for moving from one idea to another, one conversation to another, one negotiation to another, one innovation to another. The nomad *is* the movement or migration from place to place in the mind to discover new and better, greener pastures that enrich us, which leads to new growth and prosperity.

You will discover the qualities associated with the nomadic mindset through stories and metaphors. The colourful nomadic rituals and practices, rich cultures, and vast experiences can enrich and awaken your mindset so you see, hear, and understand not only your leadership style and process, but your organisation, your employees, your organisational culture, and the external world.

Migrating to Expansion

On your journey of discovery, you only need to have the capacity and desire to open your eyes, mind, and heart. This will encourage you to migrate to expansion, which is the opposite of narrowness. Awareness expands you. This, I would assume, is how you became a leader.

Expansion is the underlying breadth of the nomadic mindset; migration is the movement towards the nomadic mindset. You can better understand expansion and migration with the poetic mantra of Bineriya, a student at the National University of Mongolia:

“Think Vastly; Act Narrowly”

Think = Mindset Vastly = Expansion Act = Migration Narrowly = Focus

One way of looking at this is the way Karoli Hindriks of Jobbatical in Estonia, who provides jobs and visas for digital nomads, explains,

I think what the world needs, as we are sitting with our different mindsets, is to really know how to talk to each other, and I think this is the biggest problem in the world right now. So, if we can somehow bridge that gap to see each other’s different viewpoints, that would be really powerful.

1. Are you ready to expand yourself and migrate to different viewpoints on leadership and mindset?
2. Are you ready to unleash the nomad in you?

Migrating to Expansion

there is no beginning to this book
there is no ending to this book

you are migrating
to expansion

there is no beginning to your journey
there is no ending to your journey

you are migrating
to expansion

there is no beginning to your leadership
there is no ending to your leadership

you are migrating
to expansion

migrate to expansion
to live in the nomadic mindset, to never settle . . . for too long.
in your mind, always move, always expand to discover
better routes and greener pastures;
this is where great leaders thrive.

are you ready to migrate to expansion?

take a deep breath, look to your horizons
and step into the nomadic mindset . . .

How to Get the Best out of this Book

This leadership path book is divided into five parts: Direction, Departure, Discovery, Destination, and Distillation to aid your Rethink. You are currently in Part 1: Direction. It is not meant to be a how-to or what-to-do book, yet it gives you many ‘how’ gems. It is organized to give you rethink questions along with rethink pages at the end of each part to jot down some thoughts and actions.

The principle content exists within Parts Two through Four – Departure, Discovery and Destination. A short wrap-up is in Part 5: Distillation. Whether you’re embarking on a physical journey or a symbolic one (perhaps an important meeting, negotiation, or a big keynote), most of us go through these five parts.

Part 2: Departure – When you first head out on a journey, you want some general information about your trip. This part is divided into three Departures: Indulge in the Tea Ceremony, Taste some Nomadic History, and Recognize the Nomadic, Builder, and Settler Mindsets. I recommend, if time permits, that you read Part 2 in one sitting; then take time to rethink/reflect and answer some of the questions on the Rethink pages provided at the end of Part 2.

Part 3: Discovery – This section is divided into nine independent learning days and I encourage you to read one day at a time; then rethink, answer the questions and capture any thoughts on the Rethink pages after Day 3, 6 and 9. Each day is rich in story and offers different qualities of a nomadic mindset while integrating executive case studies and quotes from conversations with executives.

Part 4: Destination – The word “destination” can mean goal or outcome or be the term you use for reaching the end of your journey, project, negotiation, or conversation. There are three Destinations: Believe: Culture is a Pillar, Integrate: the Ability to Sustain Sustainability, and Remember: Never Settle . . . for Too Long. They are broad, defining thoughts and actions, necessary to succeed in Industry 4.0. Feel free to capture your thoughts on the Rethink pages at the end of Part 4.

In the end, you alone decide what you have experienced and learned on any journey. My hope for you is that by reading this five-part mindset exploration, you will be inspired to explore, rethink your current leadership and how it can improve through discovering new pastures, and respect humanity as a sustainable necessity. I invite you to migrate to expansion. Happy Nomading.

Mindset of your Capital
– Binderiya



“Having the right mindset is one of the most important success factors of great and inspiring leaders. The Nomadic Mindset is a necessary read for leaders of all levels traversing today’s disruptive environments.”

Marshall Goldsmith – Thinkers 50 Ranking: #1 executive coach and the only two-time #1 leadership thinker in the world

Kevin Cottam believes the mindsets of the world and leadership is becoming increasingly narrow and inward focused; if we are to survive, thrive, and flourish in Industry 4.0, we need to expand our mindsets. He proposes the path towards an expanded mindset can be found through embracing the qualities of ancient nomadic wisdom that have changed, adapted, and survived through the test of time and, in many cases, may have been forgotten.

“100% of executives interviewed said they needed more people with a Nomadic Mindset.”

The Nomadic Mindset, a metaphor for “the movement of the mind,” takes you on a journey by drawing upon and vividly sharing a wide range of exhilarating real-life stories and experiences of the nomads in Mongolia, the Maasai in Kenya, the Berbers in Southern Morocco as well as executive conversations and case studies.

This rare, fresh back-to-the-future leadership book will incite you to rethink your mindset and raise your awareness of two other mindsets: the builder and settler. All three mindsets will give you insights on how you can better lead an interconnected, innovative, and engaged organisation. Look inside to discover why you should learn about the nomadic mindset and what the nomads know that you don’t.

“A tour de force of wisdom: alive, insightful, inspirational, intriguing, timely”