



GRIT, GRACE & GRAVITAS

The Three Keys to Transforming Leadership, Presence, and Impact

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Executive Summary

Jane Firth and Andrea Zintz are leadership development experts who have worked for several decades with executives, managers, and professionals committed to evolving their leadership. Their book, *Grit, Grace, and Gravitas* offers a model and theory, drawn from their client experiences and research. Their approach enables leaders to clear away the confusion about executive presence and provides a framework through which leaders can transform their presence and impact. With the examples, stories, models, and tools the book provides, the reader gains insightful self-assessment, increased self-awareness, and a practical roadmap for becoming an exemplary leader.

What are *grit*, *grace* and *gravitas*? Why is it important to consider them together? Because with grace as the game changer, *grit*, *grace*, and *gravitas* are the three keys to transforming a leader's presence and impact. *Grace* changes "how": it changes how a leader leads, how he or she creates the culture that determines how people relate to one another; how they face and deal with challenges; how they overcome the obstacles they encounter; how they think and work together to solve problems and align to achieve what matters. *Grace* changes the odds and outcomes in the equations of people, productivity, and performance.

Mary, an executive in a large financial services firm, led people in her division through an extremely difficult period, after which her boss said, "people are complaining about your leadership." Mary responded incredulously, "What do you want—results or happy people?" Her boss looked at her and said, "Mary, the best leaders achieve both."

Mary had the *grit* and the *gravitas* to get through this difficult period but, lacking the skills and qualities of *grace*, her team wound up feeling disempowered, disheartened, and depleted. An exemplary leader would have had a more constructive and positive impact; a knowledge and focus on the importance of his or teams' resilience—melding the persistence that comes with *grit* and the know-how that comes from *gravitas* with the inspiration and energy that comes from *grace*. Leaders become a far greater asset to their organization when they can integrate their *grit* and their *gravitas* with the skills and qualities of *grace*. With *grace* a leader will have the knowledge of how to inspire, energize, and empower the men and women they lead to find their way through difficult times.

In today's work environments intense levels of stress are taking a toll on people who are striving to do their best. Leaders need a set of skills that won't be found on their job descriptions; skills that neutralize negative emotions, skills that energize, inspire, and galvanize the men and women they lead.

Grace unleashes constructive power in a leader's presence. When a leader develops the capacity for *grace*, he or she becomes more self-aware and gains greater dominion over their emotional triggers and reactions. Executive presence has to do with the essential quality of a leader's connection with others and impacts the trust a leader earns through his or her approaches, behaviors, and demeanor. A leader's presence evolves, and his or her impact becomes more productive when they manage their emotional reactions and transform them into constructive action. The result is an accelerated ability to more successfully influence and empower people, productivity, and performance.

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