

# WELCOME WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

Lying in the hospital's intensive care unit for four days, I drifted in and out of consciousness. Amid the busy hum of nurses and doctors making their rounds, concerned check-ins, and the constant beeping of the resuscitation equipment, I found myself wondering, *Is this the end?*

My three young children, Pete, Finn and Sophie, came to mind. I felt deeply regretful. Perhaps I would not see them grow up. I would not help Pete transition into primary school or cheer for him in his swim competitions. I would not read to Finn or laugh at his adorable pouting. I would miss seeing Sophie, a tomboy, dolled up in dresses. I could not bear the thought of not seeing them grow up. What would they be like in the terrible teenage

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years and as hopefully responsible adults? Leaning over weakly on the hospital bed, I choked at my request to my parents and godmother to take care of the three kids.

As an achievement-oriented and hyper-efficient professional and mother, I had lived my life constantly ticking off items on my “to do” list (only to have more the next day). I organised my life in blocks of 15 minutes. I struggled to do it all – deliver good work, manage my business and be a good mother. My time, energy and attention were fragmenting. My life was fragmenting.

While I lay on that hospital bed, I could see that it wasn't only me. My frenzied pace – with fragmented attention, energy and way of being – was a mirror of our larger world today. More than ever before, the pace quickens with 24/7 connection to our gadgets. Competition stiffens with lower-cost labour from elsewhere. Threats heighten as technology disrupts business models. Job security dips to new lows with increasing use of automation and artificial intelligence. Challenges mount as new skills are needed to survive in the changing landscape. None of these make us whole.

Thankfully, in the course of the week that felt like an eternity, the strongest antibiotics gradually helped my body gain the upper hand. My vital statistics returned to normalcy gradually. Discharged on New Year's Eve, I was relieved to be home. My life had been saved, but my energy was sapped. From zipping to and from locations or tasks in blocks of fifteen minutes, I could only catch my next breath and pause. Without vitality, I stopped work and travel for more than a year.

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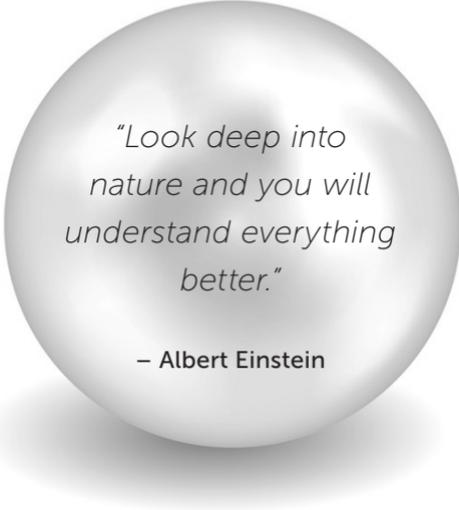
To regain my health, I picked up taiji and qigong, and in the process got reacquainted with my Eastern roots. I saw that I had to find a different way of being. I still wanted to do good work, be a good mum and make my life count. Rushing around faster trying to *do it all* was just not sustainable. A question rang in my head: "What is the alternative to the fragmentation I experienced?"

Perhaps the Eastern perspective, with 5,000 years of history, would have something to offer. With its roots in the *Dao De Jing*, Confucianism and *yin-yang*, Eastern thinking *integrates* rather than *separates*. It focuses on the whole rather than individual parts. I contrasted it to my largely Western-based education in Singapore and the United States. A hallmark of Western management is to isolate and manage the *parts*.

It dawned on me that perhaps we can respond to this fragmentation with a new way of thinking – the integration of Eastern



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*"Look deep into  
nature and you will  
understand everything  
better."*

**– Albert Einstein**

and Western thinking. Pearls are formed at the intersection between land and the sea. Imagine for a moment that the West is the land and the East is the sea. In the merging of ideologies between East and West, what are the pearls? How might these help us integrate work and life in a sustainable whole?

To answer these questions, I talked to leaders and executives who seemed to be at ease in both Eastern and Western worlds. They helped me understand how to stay whole and balanced in spite of the conundrums, conflicts and challenges we face in today's disruptive world. I researched how individuals and organisations can be healthy and deliver good work. Wholeness came as an alternative to this fragmentation. Wholeness is a sense of completeness and balance within oneself and with one's community.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK**

This book brings together the pearls of both East and West so that you can be, think and act whole, and live your life and do your best work in the world. As Einstein said, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

This book explores the why, what and how of having more wholeness at work and in your life. It is written for professionals and leaders searching for greater alignment and harmony in today’s fragmented world. If you have picked up this book, you probably identify with the experience of fragmentation, dilemma, and tension when leading yourself and others. Experiencing wholeness during holidays or in meditation retreats is good but insufficient. With challenges in everyday life, the quest is to be whole despite the tension we experience. My goal is to point to an alternative way of being, thinking and behaving that will allow you to be more whole – for yourself as well as for the greater good.

This book is also a cross-cultural book, relevant for executives and leaders who straddle the worlds of East and West and want to better understand the nuances of or resolve the conflicts arising in East-West interactions in business life. Thus, it is highly relevant reading for coaches and leadership development facilitators as well as people in the human development industry.

What will you discover in this book? Here is an overview.

## **Chapter 1: When Wholeness Is Missing**

In this first chapter, you'll read about real-life examples of the lack of wholeness in individuals, teams and organisations that culminate in negative consequences at work and in life. This chapter guides you to reflect on what drains you and keeps wholeness elusive in your life.

## **Chapter 2: Joys of Wholeness**

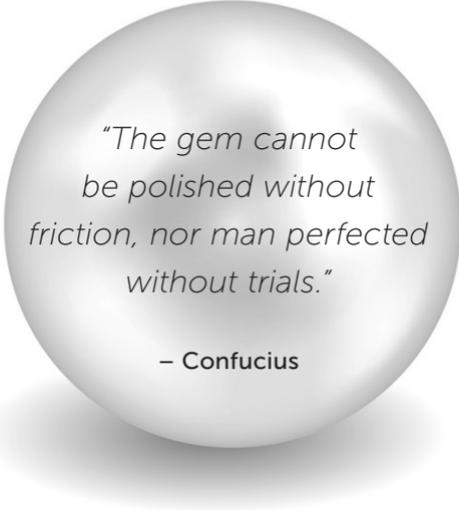
Included in this chapter are stories of professionals, leaders and business owners who share their journeys toward wholeness. These stories give us clues on the pathway towards wholeness, highlighting the nourishment and wisdom that wholeness offers. You're encouraged to reflect on moments of wholeness in your own life.

## **Chapter 3: How Wholeness Works**

"Wholeness" is one of those words that everyone seems to know the meaning of but no one has the same definition. This chapter pulls together ideas about what wholeness means. You'll think about what wholeness means to you personally.

## **Chapter 4: Anchoring**

Anchoring is the first of the ABCs of wholeness. Anchors keep us rooted. Your anchor is who you are as an individual and who you are in relation to your community. Awareness of your anchor gives you clarity, courage and commitment. The deeper



*"The gem cannot  
be polished without  
friction, nor man perfected  
without trials."*

– Confucius

and wider your anchor, the more positive your impact. In this chapter, I invite you to clarify the dimensions of your anchor.

### **Chapter 5: Balancing**

Is balance like a scale – when one side is up, the other side is necessarily down? Or is balance a 50:50 split like a compromise? This chapter argues for dynamic balance being 100:100 over time, creating a *thirdness* that is more expansive and creative. You'll find 100:100 answers to any dilemma using the Mobius Insight™ Tool.

### **Chapter 6: Clearing**

Clearing is about emptying yourself so that you can purposefully *be*. We are useful when we are empty – empty of judgments, ego and mental clutter. You increase your capacity to reflect in

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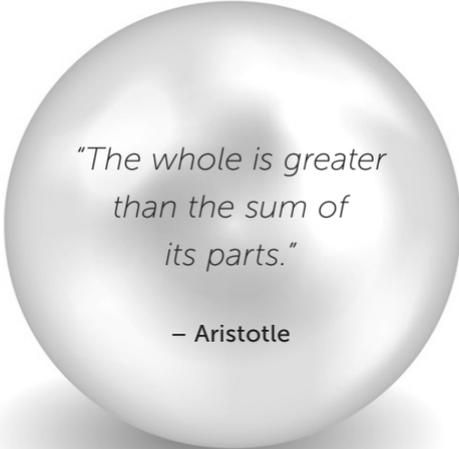
the moment, to be aware of your impact on your environment and to sense what's needed in a situation. This helps you act in wisdom. You are encouraged to experience an activity to empty out.

### **Chapter 7: Integrating the ABCs in a Disruptive World**

This chapter integrates Anchoring, Balance and Clearing in the disruptive world that we live in today. You will think about how you can use these ABCs in your life and at work.

### **Epilogue: Wholeness Beyond "I"**

Ultimately, wholeness is the larger community – your family, team, organisation, community or even the world at large. The sense of community refers to our capacity to be contributors rather than consumers, to care for strangers and to take responsibility for our impact on the world.



*"The whole is greater  
than the sum of  
its parts."*

– Aristotle

## WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

At the end of every chapter is an applied section, “Over to You”, where you’ll discover tools and exercises that will help you apply wholeness in your own work and life. Use these tools to generate new perspectives and responses on your existing questions. I invite you to treat this book as a companion for reflection. There’s no need to rush to the end of the book. Talk to friends about your thoughts and what ideas you might try. Better still, create your own wholeness community and support one another on your individual journeys.

As I reflect on my own life six years after my illness, I am grateful for these lessons. Today, I enjoy being with my children, appreciate simple meals with my family, challenge myself to contribute through my work, find fulfillment in making a difference in people’s lives, and take time to listen to the wisdom of nature. I sincerely hope these ideas will be of service to you as you live your own life of wholeness.