

Preamble

We met in Kuwait in 2008, when we both were working for Kuwait Oil Company. From the initial moment to date, we have established a collaboration that resulted in many pioneering initiatives in the oil sector of Kuwait that make us very proud. For several years, we have wanted to craft a compilation of the learnings and achievements attained in the numerous initiatives in which we were engaged together. We felt that the extraordinary match that we developed in our collaboration through the years was unique.

At first, we thought that such a compilation would provide an interesting reference for others. Perhaps, by identifying what worked for us and what did not, others would learn how to replicate this kind of winning approach such as the one that we built together. We then realized that we preferred, instead, to construct a more comprehensive learning platform for all those interested in leadership and resilience. With this book of stories about remarkable individuals, we want to trigger learning grounded on the reader's self-reflection about leadership and resilience. We want to share our conviction that reaching success is a gradual process, full of risks and decisions, and that it is as unique as each individual's story is.

This is how we formulated this book, as an assemblage of our own ideas on the corporate environment in relation to resilience and leadership, with profiles to demonstrate key concepts. We interviewed a small selection of our liaisons, colleagues, and friends, who represent a sample of a much larger network, many of whom have contributed over the years to our developing understanding of leadership and resilience. Their willingness to be interviewed for this initiative is as important as our own, because they helped to shape who we are today, with respect to resilience and leadership.

The leaders whom we invited to interviews come from different segments of the oil and gas sector, which is our business arena. We believe that the learnings and echoes derived from their stories are applicable to all industries, as leadership is truly universal. They were clearly “in the trenches,” and we developed for them a higher respect than the one we already had, after discovering new details and hidden facets of their journeys toward their high ranks.

Being loyal to our original intention of capturing our fruitful learnings, there is a prolific utilization of the “*we*” and “*us*,” and we definitively like that! Our choice of concepts, and our viewpoints and comments are the result of joint insights developed in our more than 68 combined years of experience in the oil industry.

We believe that a leader is like a lighthouse. A leader stands tall, guiding the ships into the shore with bright light, through quiet waters and during tempests as well. Inside each lighthouse, there is a steep interior flight of stairs, which has to be climbed one by one to get to the top to illuminate the shore. This book is about those hidden staircases.

We hope you will return to these pages many times, either to read again segments of this compilation for your own recollection or to share it with your mentees, as we encourage you to guide young professionals as part of your personal journey through life and work.

Ahmadi, Kuwait
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Learned in the Trenches

Insights into Leadership and Resilience Compiled by

Two Women Leaders in Energy

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