

Preface

The once upon a time of this book begins some years ago when I embarked on my doctoral research at Ulster University. The study of small business from that early point has guided my research enthusiasm ever since. I have always taken an applied approach to my research, exploring the theoretical perspectives as well as industry impact. Indeed, there is also no doubt married to a small business owner for over 21 years has also grounded my research in the reality of doing business! The curiosity in researching leadership derives from both my own story of learning to lead as a young Head of Department in a large Business School some years ago. It was also my commitment to helping others develop their leadership capacity whether student, business owner, or school teacher in Uganda (where I worked with Fields of Life and 50 school teachers) that forged this new mandate around leadership purpose in the field of small business.

As a student, I remember my fascination with the stories told by my lecturers that brought various subject matters to life. So, I was always keen to make sure I was the storyteller in addition to educator in the classroom. While the book reflects much of what I have learned from doing leadership, most of all it is evidenced by my experience of working

with over 50 entrepreneurial leaders in the Lead2Grow programme, recognised by the British Academy of Management Education Practice award in 2016. As a social scientist, I believe the business leader's life story exists as a powerful resource not only for leadership itself and the study therein, but as role model for other businesses. The storytelling by entrepreneurial leaders in real time demonstrates the power of stories as well as the significance of leading with purpose. To this end, the book is written for student's studying small business management and or leadership, as well as small business leaders and practitioners seeking to find purpose in achieving their professional and personal goals.

Depending on the interests of reader, there are several ways to read this book instead of reading chapters in sequence. If primarily interested in the stories from entrepreneurial small business leaders, the reader can go to the introduction where the scene is set followed by Chaps. 7 and 8. Or, if the reader is a practitioner in the area of leadership development and would like to explore ideas for small business programmes, then it is recommended to read Chaps. 4 and 5, followed by the learning to lead in Chap. 6. However, if the reader is a student or anyone who is keen to understand the whole narrative from beginning to end, then it is most beneficial to read the book and all chapters in its entirety to grasp a full understanding of the story of leading small business.

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