

## FOREWORD

### *The Power of Connectedness*

Harvard University and IMD Business School both called Nadine B. Hack, a “Master Bridge Builder.” Having known and admired Nadine for many decades, I agree. I’ve seen her effectively connect people from all corners of the world to help each of them advance their respective missions.

Connectedness – the idea that all of humanity is inextricably interconnected – is at the core of what we in South Africa call “*Ubuntu*” or “*I am a person through my relationship with other people.*”

Long before terms like “corporate responsibility” and “sustainability” were common, Nadine was guided by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s idea of “Beloved Community”, Martin Buber’s “I-Thou” philosophy and Ubuntu. No one embodies the spirit of these teachings better than her.

Given the alarming rise of xenophobic nationalism based on fear and division, embodying connectedness is now more critical than ever. So, Nadine’s call for the *urgency of connectedness* is extremely timely. I’ve been the beneficiary of her unique ability to bring disparate people together for the benefit of all.

She’s also interviewed top leaders in their fields – ha, ha, I’m one! – all of whom talk about the vital role that connectedness has and is playing in their various areas of endeavor.

What I think you’ll find most interesting – and inviting – is that many of these people talk not just about their achievements but of being happier. By first embracing internal connectedness, then involving more people, more input, increased imagination and innovation, all creating a greater depth of loyalty and activity, these leaders have lightened their loads, decreased their stress, and enlarged the scope of their lives.

This process requires increased emotional intelligence and instinct, fostering relationships and the camaraderie that comes from being part of a team, larger community and, in fact, taking personal responsibility for the state of the world. It also calls for functioning with less ego.

This may seem counterintuitive to some in positions of leadership, since their territorial ego-based diet of leadership may consist of keeping strategies and activities secret, maintaining control by keeping everyone else “in their place,” making as *much* as possible, sharing as *little* as possible, and never being “*soft*” because being “*hard*” is the way to win. But this is no longer viable or sustainable.

Multiple significant shifts - the digital revolution, a global pandemic, broad unrest in response to social inequity - changes life as greatly as going from meat-and-potatoes to being a vegan. Don’t worry: not everyone must give up hamburgers for tofu, but everyone who is or desires to be a leader must add a few more fruits and vegetables to their diet *and* must welcome more guests to the table.

With five decades of international experience, the past 27 years as CEO of beCause Global Consulting, Nadine helps individuals and organizations connect to their core purpose and meaning, connect across silos within their organizations, connect with external stakeholders, friendly and even adversarial, all created by building and sustaining trust. I’ve seen her do it repeatedly. Do you have your sunglasses on? She’s a star!

The more she worked with different types of leaders in dramatically divergent situations – from our former President Nelson Mandela to Fortune 500 executives and leaders of international NGOs – the more she came to appreciate how much we all have in common and that we need each other.

The ability to see and understand others’ situations and mirror it back to them distilled and integrated, regardless of the complexity, is what Nadine and her fellow “masters of connectedness” will help you learn to do in an empathetic, supportive way. Our world desperately needs these lessons.

So, be ready to be inspired by the vision outlined in this lovely, accessible book about a more inclusive way of living and working together.

– Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu  
1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate