



**T**oday, I write about the absolute key to igniting greatness as a leader. Without it, there is no chance you can become a great leader. It is the decision to be vulnerable.

Recent trips to Pakistan, Turkey, Africa, Italy, Canada, Mexico and of course my travels throughout the U.S., working with senior leaders and senior leadership groups - from the private and public sector - has reinforced what I knew to be the case two years ago when I started writing my book, *Intelligent Leadership*: We have no shortage of raw in-

# The Last Word

## by John Mattone

*“The key to unlocking your massive leadership potential is making the decision to be vulnerable”*

*John Mattone*

tellekt in the world. There are a lot of smart people in the world! But, *we do have a massive shortage of people who can lead other people* - whether we are talking about industry, government, or schools. Being a great leader does require intellect, but a person with raw intellect in no way guarantees that they will become a great leader. We have a worldwide massive gap in leadership. There are over 50,000 books currently in print on the topic of leadership (yes, I have contributed to this number!). Each year there are countless speeches, seminars and conferences on the topic of leadership (and, yes, I have contributed here too!). Yet, despite all the books, seminars, and conferences, I still see a massive and deeply troubling *leadership gap* in the world. Actually, it is a *leadership crisis*. Why is this leadership crisis happening? There are many theories. Here's mine: **Becoming a great leader begins precisely when/if you make the most important decision you will ever make as a leader... the decision to be vulnerable.** The question I love to ask lead-

ers I coach is this: “Are you willing and, most importantly, do you have the guts to look inside the depths of your soul and accept that while you do have “gifts” and strengths, that you also have weaknesses?”

Great leaders make people around them successful. They are passionate and committed, authentic, courageous, honest and reliable. But in today's fast-paced, high-pressured environment, leaders need a coach, a mentor, or someone they can trust to help them make the decision to be *vulnerable* so they can learn the real truth about their behavior. After coaching over 200 senior executives from various organizations all over the world, here's what I want to share: *When CEO's and all leaders start displaying an equal or greater passion for wanting to achieve accuracy and objectivity in how they are seen as leaders compared to the passion they display for wanting to achieve accuracy and objectivity in the operations they manage, this will mark the beginning to the end of the world's leadership crisis.* Unfortunately, most CEO's and other executives rarely get the required level of accuracy and objectivity from their direct employees and even more infrequently from board members.

Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman and former CEO of Google, once said that his best advice to new CEOs was “have a coach.” Schmidt goes on to say “once I realized I could trust him [the coach] and that he could help me with perspective, I decided this was a great idea”.

Great leadership starts at the top. Great leaders create environments that they build on an unshakeable foundation of openness, honesty and trust that serves to *unlock* and *unleash* individual and collective greatness. Individual and collective greatness will never be achieved in any organization unless every leader and employee in that organization learns to make the *decision to be vulnerable*.