



# QUICKSILVER

A Revolutionary Way  
to Lead the Many  
and the Few —  
Beginning with YOU

Michael O'Brien, Ed.D. and Larry Shook

# QUICKSILVER

A Revolutionary Way  
to Lead the Many  
and the Few—  
Beginning with YOU

---

**MICHAEL O'BRIEN, Ed.D.**  
and **LARRY SHOOK**

SOMBRERO PRESS  
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON



*an imprint of*

THE PRINTED WORD INC.

P.O. Box 31166 • Spokane, WA 99223

Copyright © 2010 by Michael J. O'Brien

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, copied, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, mechanical—including photocopying, recording, or storage in a retrieval system, without prior permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

O'Brien, Michael J. (Michael James), 1953-  
Quicksilver : a revolutionary way to lead the many and the few—beginning with  
you / by Michael O'Brien and Larry Shook.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-934738-21-4 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Leadership—Psychological aspects. 2. Decision making—Psychological  
aspects. 3. Problem solving. I. Shook, Larry. II. Title.

BF637.L4O27 2010

158—dc22

2009038650

ISBN-13: 978-1-934738-21-4

ISBN-10: 1-934738-21-2

First Printing January 2010

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

*Book Design: Dotti Albertine*

The corporate mission of The Printed Word Inc.: *inform, uplift & empower*

# CONTENTS

<i>FOREWORD</i> by Michael D. Connelly	xvii
INTRODUCTION	xxi
<b>Invitation to the Reinventors' Ball</b> The nuclear reactor at your desk	
CHAPTER ONE	1
<b>Wall Street's Monster</b> The wages of unconscious leadership	
CHAPTER TWO	31
<b>The Way We Are</b> The world changes the brain, then the brain returns the favor and changes the world. Who's in charge?	
<b>Instruction Manual</b> <i>The Angel in the Stone</i> : A Quicksilver chisel set for continuously discovering, and displaying, your best self	55
CHAPTER THREE	65
<b>Be Absolutely Accountable</b> The surprising source of true freedom	

CHAPTER FOUR	81
<b>Be (Really) Brave</b>	
The world's terrible lie about courage	
CHAPTER FIVE	101
<b>Be Authentic</b>	
The Cliff Notes on trustworthiness	
CHAPTER SIX	121
<b>Be Brilliantly Intentional</b>	
The beacon within can cut through any darkness. Here's how to use it.	
CHAPTER SEVEN	153
<b>Create the Truth</b>	
The mind invents reality, and then says, "I didn't do it."	
CHAPTER EIGHT	
<b>The Discreet Charm of the Honest Mess</b>	
A lesson from baseball	175
CHAPTER NINE	
<b>2.7 Seconds</b>	
Bull-riding requires a fire in the belly. So does Quicksilver leadership	195

EPILOGUE	207
<b>Captain Ski</b>	
A personal memory of a great leader amidst great confusion	
<b>Quicksilver Quickly</b>	217
Three Simple Steps	
Quicksilver Principles	
List of Practices	
<b>Authors' Bios</b>	221



# LIST OF PRACTICES

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	77
<b>Change Shoulds to Coulds</b>	
Don't let the past determine your future	
<b>COURAGE</b>	
<b>Breathe</b>	
Oxygen fuels your emotional intelligence	94
<b>Tell Yourself a Story</b>	
Take charge of your mind's greatest power	96
<b>AUTHENTICITY</b>	
<b>Evaluate a Stuck Relationship</b>	117
Navigate beyond your fear toward your principles	
<b>Be Complete with Incompletion</b>	118
Live well, with some things unfinished	
<b>INTENTIONALITY</b>	
<b>Discover Your Defensive Routines:</b>	143
<b>Fight &amp; Flight</b>	
Learn to notice when you've been hijacked	
<b>Have a Breakthrough Conversation</b>	146
See the other person's story	
<b>Scout for Organizational Defensive Routines</b>	148
Discuss (gulp) the unmentionable	

<b>Move Beyond Bad Moods, Quickly</b>	150
Notice and lay down your burdens	
<b>CREATE THE TRUTH</b>	
<b>Keep a “Snake List”</b>	167
Awareness and good technique stop your problems from biting you	
<b>Be Interested vs. Interesting</b>	168
Really, try it. You’ll become interesting	
<b>Turn Complaints Into Requests</b>	168
End a lot of suffering	
<b>Depose Ideology</b>	169
Taking a stand is way more powerful	
<b>Explore the Heart of Conflict with Constructive Dialogue</b>	171
Develop a nimble mind that creates empathy	
<b>CAPITALIZE ON MESSES</b>	
<b>Ask Yourself a “Paradoxical Development Question”</b>	187
Unleash the <i>über</i> problem-solver within	
<b>Ask Yourself What You Need</b>	189
Illuminate your secret yearnings so you can get them met	
<b>Ask for Forgiveness</b>	191
Liberate yourself from past mistakes	
<b>Ask Yourself the Biggest Question of All</b>	192
When you know the answer, you can truly lead	



# INTRODUCTION

## **Invitation to the Reinventors' Ball**

By Larry Shook

**QUICKSILVER WAS THE NICKNAME** given to liquid metal mercury, the shiny stuff used in old-fashioned thermometers. Quicksilver became a metaphor for suddenness and unpredictability. If you ever saw mercury skitter across the floor from a broken thermometer, you know why.

The quicksilver in this book's title refers to two aspects of our world, two sides of the same coin.

One face of that coin seems alarmingly unstable. There you find the unprecedented pace of change of modern life.

Opposite, however, is a scene of almost blindingly bright hopefulness. There you glimpse the infinite ability of the human brain to both respond to change and create change.

One obvious cause of the disorienting change now blurring around us is the basic machine of our times, the computer. Its heart is the microchip. According to Moore's Law, the microchip doubles in power about every eighteen months. Imagine that happening to every other machine in your life—your toaster, your car, the reading light on your nightstand. Year after year. Decade after decade. It wouldn't

be long before your toaster would be a nuclear reactor; your car a rocket; your reading light a little sun incinerating anything within millions of miles.

Computers may not be quite that destabilizing, but they're not far from it.

*Item:* According to Pennsylvania Congressman Paul Kanjorski, chairman of the House Capital Markets Subcommittee, at about eleven o'clock one morning in mid-September 2008, the Federal Reserve Board detected a massive electronic drain of U.S. money market accounts.

Here was something new under the sun: a hidden assault on the spinal cord of the economy. The assault, however, was mounted by consumers, not terrorists. No queue of panicked depositors circled any building. Instead, there was a run on the banks that was perfectly invisible—except to those keeping watch over electrons.

In an hour or two, Kanjorski told the audience of a CSPAN program, some \$550 billion was withdrawn. The Fed pumped in \$150 billion, but it couldn't stop the bleeding. The nation's central bank announced a \$250,000 guarantee per deposit and closed the money market accounts. If it hadn't done that, said Kanjorski, the Fed estimated that by two that afternoon, \$5.5 trillion would have disappeared from the banking system.

Citing the conclusions of Federal Reserve Board officials, Kanjorski said that the global economy would have collapsed within 24 hours. Political systems as we know them would have ceased to exist.

That's the scary side of the quicksilver coin, the side that resembles the storyline of a James Bond movie. It has

an infinite range of less apocalyptic but no less... *interesting* manifestations.

*Item:* During a nightclub act, Michael Richards vents a racial tirade. An audience member records it with a cell phone. Thanks to YouTube, in a matter of hours the career of one of America's most brilliant and beloved comedians lies in ruins.

*Item:* Passengers observe United Airlines baggage handlers throwing guitar cases at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. One of the instruments' owners, Canadian singer and songwriter Dave Carroll, looks on in "terror," as he later immortalizes the incident in lyrics. He alerts United personnel, who respond with indifference. The entertainer spends nine months in a futile effort to get United to compensate him for a broken \$3,500 Taylor guitar. Finally, he commemorates the incident in a catchy, lighthearted YouTube video called "United Breaks Guitars." It goes viral, and in no time millions of viewers are tapping their feet to this lampoonery of United's corporate culture.

Little wonder that the lifecycles of products and companies grow shorter and shorter as the latest killer app pulls the rug out from under them. Little wonder that jobs, and whole industries, come and go now with such disconcerting speed. It's part of the rapidly changing portrait of our quicksilver age.

On the other side of the coin is where you find hopeful news from the world of neuroscience. Research shows that the human brain possesses about a hundred billion neurons, connected by about a hundred trillion synapses. These are

living cells that think. They think automatically, often based on lessons learned by long-dead ancestors. Clearly, some of those lessons go out of date. On the other hand, our neural heritage lets us think on purpose. Thinking on purpose enables continuous *intentional* learning.

Just how great is our learning potential?

Scientists tell us that the number of potential interactions among our thinking cells—our neurons and synapses—exceeds the number of molecules in the known universe. Here, then, is a galaxy of latent cognitive potential between our ears.

Were we to succeed in focusing the brain's power on the challenges of the "energy crisis," the "food crisis," the inconvenient truth of your choice, evidence is strong that the problems would be quickly solved.

Unfortunately, we're not doing that. In fact, the evidence is just plain disturbing that humanity today suffers from a learning disorder that threatens its survival.

This book offers a solution.

*Quicksilver* is based on more than twenty-five years of the experience of Dr. Michael O'Brien as an executive coach. He and his team have about a hundred years of executive coaching experience among them. That's a lot of time spent in a rarified, high-judgment environment where individuals are constantly called upon to make decisions that affect countless thousands of lives.

Based on all that experience, Michael and his colleagues have come to a simple conclusion: the most important challenge facing leaders today—and the rest of us, too—is consciousness.

But what does that mean? What it does *not* mean, as Michael uses the term, is idle contemplation of the meaning of life. It means, instead, continuous awareness—sometimes with laser focus—of the unique way each of us sees events and then decides what they mean; decides what, if any, action to take.

Consciousness, as the term is used here, means learning to think differently, on purpose, when we need to. Neuroscience, the hopeful side of the quicksilver coin, reveals that we are capable of doing this, and that the results are transformative. It also shows why thinking differently on purpose is so hard.

This book offers a way to overcome that difficulty. It contains exercises Michael has developed that have proven to be revolutionary, exercises that allow people to shift their perspectives on the fly, in the face of trying circumstances. This instantly changes their experience of events, exposing new, otherwise hidden options. Not coincidentally, the exercises also reprogram the brain, creating new neural/synaptic combinations. That actually changes the world. In a sense, it *creates* the world we live in. This mysterious molecular event may be the seminal phenomenon of great leadership.

Year after year, Michael is invited to teach these exercises to organizations as diverse as the IRS, New York Life, and Procter & Gamble for a simple reason: they work. You cannot perform these practices without changing your life. Learning to constantly perform them in the face of challenge will give you a control over events that is not otherwise possible.

If you are a leader, the practices outlined in this book will lever your natural abilities and constantly help you

develop new capacity. This will inspire others to follow your example.

While the exercises are deceptively simple, integrating them into your life takes discipline and commitment.

A note: Michael asked me to use my journalism background to help him frame this book's content. The book's ideas flow from Michael's education and experience. The ideas are his. The voice is his, to the best of my ability to translate it. My attempts to do so are based on several years of discussion, an earlier book we wrote together, and a week of intensive tape-recorded interviewing on an island off the Florida coast with ospreys mewling outside above the peaceful spring surf of the Gulf. I am honored and grateful to have been able to make a modest contribution to this book. I truly believe that its subject—consciousness—represents the most important item on the human agenda today.

I think these times welcome all of us to a kind of great ball—a reinventors' ball. Whether you lead only your own life—your infinitely precious life—or the precious lives of many others, I hope you will consider *Quicksilver* to be your personal invitation to the ball. May you choose to dance your heart out.

## WALL STREET'S MONSTER

### The Wages of Unconscious Leadership



*“Our inferential machinery is not made  
for a complicated environment.”*

—NASSIM NICHOLAS TALEB

**IT TURNS OUT THE WORLD** really is flat. At least, according to the Flat Earth Society it is. No relic of antiquity, the Society is as much with us as the Federal Reserve Board. You can go to the Web sites of both organizations and check them out.

“Deprogramming the masses since 1547” is the motto of the former.

Motto of the latter: “The Federal Reserve, the central bank of the United States, provides the nation with a safe, flexible, and stable monetary and financial system.”

Members of the Flat Earth Society subscribe to a scientific theory that was largely discredited at the time of Aristotle, about 2,300 years ago. Nevertheless, its contemporary adherents cite incontrovertible evidence that the home planet is flat. Evidence to the contrary, they argue—planet portraits snapped from space, say—is a hoax.

Whatever Earth’s actual geometrical shape, given its

current financial crisis, public opinion may be divided at the moment over whether the Federal Reserve Board's motto is any more believable than that of the Flat Earth Society.

As an entrée to this book's subject—what leaders need to know about how the working of the human mind governs perceptions, beliefs, and decisions—this is not as ironic as you might think.

Scientists tell us—I trust this is no hoax—that most functions of the brain are unconscious. Even though leaders tend to be better looking, smarter and richer than most of us, it logically follows that they are no more conscious than the rest of us.

**The great financial meltdown of 2008 is a textbook example of unconscious leadership if ever there was one.**

What would make that deduction untrue, of course, is if leaders took special steps to increase their consciousness. The high rate of organizational misadventure does not suggest they do.

This is upsetting. It conjures an unsettling image—if not exactly of the blind leading the blind, at least of the somnambulant leading the somnambulant. It's enough to make it hard to get a good night's rest.

The great financial meltdown of 2008 that shook the global (or table-shaped) economy to its very foundation is a case in point, a textbook example of unconscious leadership if ever there was one.

After the domino-like collapses of Bear Stearns, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Washington Mutual, insurance giant AIG, international

financial services behemoth UBS, and the precipitous tumble of global stock markets, the U.S. Congress passed a \$700 billion economic bailout plan, one of the most controversial acts in U.S. history. That was in October 2008. The next month, the Federal Reserve Board proposed an additional \$800 billion stimulus package to shore up housing and credit markets. Together these added up to \$1.5 trillion, or about \$5,000 for every man, woman and child in the country.

It hardly needs saying that for U.S. citizens this was the worst financial quarter in history. It was as though the country had been invaded by a foreign power with completely different economic ideas than ours. What happened?

**It was as though the country had been invaded by a foreign power with completely different economic ideas than ours.**

*The New York Times*, the nation's newspaper of record, published a story suggesting—visually at least—that the cause of our trouble was a crocodile attack.

Its March 23, 2008 story “What Created This Monster?” was accompanied by an illustration of a distinguished suit-clad gentleman—presumably a Wall Street native—reading a newspaper as he perched unsuspectingly on a giant crocodile's snout. “Yes, the Markets Can Bite Back” was the subhead.

The “monster” was an investment product known as a derivative, an asset that has no value itself. (It *derives* its value from something else that does have inherent value—your home mortgage, for instance.)

Historians will probably write that the *Times* story was unfair to crocodiles. Because Wall Street's Monster was

*... continued*

CHAPTER TWO

**THE WAY WE ARE**

**The Wages of Unconscious Leadership**



**Unable to differentiate between physical and psychological stress, the brain has developed a genius for denial and an aptitude for “cognitive static.”**

*“All I can say is, beware of geeks...  
bearing formulas.”*

—WARREN BUFFET

**IN THE MID-1960s**, an American Air Force colonel named Ed Orr had an experience while he was stationed in Turkey that would haunt him all his life.

Orr’s job required him to travel to remote military outposts over the first modern Turkish highways. The routes covered vast emptiness, and except for the rare semi truck hauling freight, Orr’s was often the only vehicle on the road.

The highlight of Orr’s travels was the occasional sight of a lone shepherd with a huge flock of sheep, slowly crossing the plain along an ancient caravan route. The herds contained a thousand sheep and more. They were always flanked by a pair of enormous livestock guardian dogs. It was a scene right out of the Bible. Orr always pulled over to drink it in.

Orr was troubled by how frequently he came across the

*... continued*

## CHAPTER THREE

### **BE ABSOLUTELY ACCOUNTABLE**

**True freedom comes with understanding that we alone are the authors of every event, scene, chapter, and outcome in our lives.**



*“Liberty means responsibility.  
That is why most men dread it.”*

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

**LEADERSHIP, AS I DEFINE IT,** is a relationship that rests on the absolute accountability of the leader. It means that a leader’s accountability is not contingent upon the actions of others.

This approach to leadership involves constantly monitoring the performance of others, noting when and where performance needs adjustment in response to changing conditions. It requires maintaining a list of actions one can take to support the changes being requested of colleagues—and then, of course, constantly taking those actions.

This is an extremely dynamic process. It takes the highest level of engagement on the part of the leader. It takes a selfless willingness to change oneself to help others change themselves in order to continually rise to the demands of the ever-changing marketplace.

The purpose of absolute accountability, in other words, is

*... continued*

CHAPTER FOUR

**BE (REALLY) BRAVE**

**The World's Terrible Lie About Courage**



*“This man [John Wayne] was a symbol of the fake machismo we had come to hate...”*

—WILLIAM MANCHESTER

**MOST OF MY CLIENTS ARE NOT BRAVE.** I don't mean they're cowards. I mean they don't have a healthy and effective relationship with fear. Most people don't. This is a serious problem, because no character trait is more valuable than real courage. Especially for leaders.

Similarly, no disability is more crippling than unmanaged fear. Note the qualifier. You can't prevent fear, and you wouldn't want to. Fear keeps you alive and healthy. You can only manage fear, but you can't do that until you de-stigmatize it.

Paradoxically, mismanaging fear can make you sick or even kill you. That's right, fear sometimes kills.

Managing fear—first noticing it, then choosing your response to it—is true courage.

**No disability is more crippling than unmanaged fear.**

**Managing fear—first noticing it, then choosing your response to it—is true courage.**

*... continued*

## BE AUTHENTIC

### The Momentary You and Why It Matters



*“This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow,  
as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”*

**THAT WAS POLONIUS** advising his son Laertes in *Hamlet*. The old man was talking about the interpersonal value of authenticity, which is one of the most important forms of honesty. Being authentic, that is, being honest with yourself about whether your actions reflect your values—or the values you espouse—makes you trustworthy.

Since Shakespeare put those immortal words in Polonius’ mouth they have been a paradigm of excellent advice on all kinds of matters, trustworthiness not least of all.

**Authenticity concentrates even the most confusing blur of events into a single point of focus: trust.**

At the micro level, trustworthiness wins friends and influences people. At the macro level, it creates healthy economies, protecting savings, retirement nest eggs, college funds. Trustworthiness attracts bank depositors the way honey attracts bees.

The tragedy of Polonius’s advice is that it seems naïve—what practical role has authenticity in a venal and complicated

*... continued*

## BE BRILLIANTLY INTENTIONAL

**The beacon within can cut through any darkness.**

**Here's how to use it...**



*“It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also.”*

—OSCAR WILDE

**BY NOW YOU KNOW** that almost all of our perceptions take on a form of storytelling. It's the way our brains process the conscious and non-conscious input of our senses. And that input, as we have also seen, comes to us through the synaptic filter, the “story editor” if you will, automatically installed as a free peripheral by the act of living.

So synapses form the clockwork organism of habit. They are the “structure” in the structural determinism discussed in Chapter Two. I think you could say that we are our synapses packaged in skin, bone and muscle. The twinkling impulses of those synapses propel our habits. They move us in every sense.

**Habits are the key. Our experience creates them. Habits return the favor by shaping our experience.**

We come, then, to an important insight about the curiously circular nature of the human condition: life shapes

*... continued*

## CREATE THE TRUTH

### Snakes, Mirages and the “Real” World



*“The mind creates ‘reality’ and then says, ‘I didn’t do it.’”*

—DAVID BOHM

**AMONG THE WRECKAGE** caused by the crash of Wall Street’s Monster through the china shop of global finance lay a piece of debris so telling as to all but prove what really caused the crash. *New Yorker* magazine writer John Cassidy found it and put it on display in his March 31, 2008 profile of former Merrill Lynch CEO E. Stanley O’Neal.

“Talking over coffee with a visitor to his apartment not long ago, O’Neal compared running a major Wall Street firm to being an astronaut on the doomed Challenger space shuttle,” wrote Cassidy. “He described how the engineers check everything and say that it’s all systems go. Then an O-ring that hasn’t been tested at the right temperature fails, and disaster results. When he was at Merrill, O’Neal said, he used to invoke the Challenger frequently. He added that he had never imagined that he himself would figure in such a calamity.”

O’Neal, in other words, had a bumper sticker view of

*... continued*

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DISCREET CHARM  
OF THE HONEST MESS

**The key to Quicksilver performance:  
don't believe everything you think**



*“You have to do something **right** to get an error.”*

—BILL JAMES

**BASEBALL**, the great American pastime, has an embedded illusion that turns out to be a great American metaphor. For more than a century, as the sport evolved from its rustic origins into a colorful pageant, contests were won and lost based on subtleties that were invisible to even the most experienced observers. You couldn't watch a baseball game and believe your eyes to understand what you had seen. Neither could you consult the sport's conventional statistics and make much more sense of the field of play. There was a hidden drama going on. It took an elegant essayist and prickly contrarian named Bill James to point it out.

James brought a new interpretation to baseball's statistics to show that the game's conventional way of counting and interpreting pivotal events—errors, walks, and runs batted in, for instance—actually created a field of illusion. That made effective management of both teams and players impossible.

Errors, noted James, involved a dubious moral judgment.

*... continued*

## 2.7 SECONDS

**Bull-riding requires a fire in the belly.  
So does Quicksilver leadership.**



*“Be bold, and mighty forces will come to your aid.”*

—GOETHE

IT'S A CLICHÉ that most of us take too long to figure out that life is for real. And that it's far shorter than we realize. And much sweeter than we dream.

That's what country music star Tim McGraw sings about in “Live Like You Were Dying,” his ballad to a father dying young. The lyrics celebrate the decision to live intensely in the face of death.

What did you do when you got the diagnosis? the troubadour wants to know—*Man, what'd you do?*

The father answers in the triumphal refrain that makes the song an anthem to life. *I went sky divin,' I went Rocky Mountain climbin,' I went two point seven seconds on a bull named Fu Manchu.*

The dying father's wish for his son seems shocking: *Some day I hope you get the chance to live like you were dying.*

We all have our Fu Manchus. They're the countless  
... *continued*

EPILOGUE BY LARRY SHOOK

## CAPTAIN SKI

### Great Leadership in a Time of Great Confusion—A Personal Memory



*“To control our brains we have to  
be mistrustful of our brains.”*

—DR. JAMES LECKMAN, *Yale University School of Medicine*

**THE ARGUMENT OF THIS BOOK** is that all of us today face an urgent mandate to wake up, to become “conscious.” As this book defines it, becoming conscious means learning how to distrust our thoughts, while trusting our ability to *think* about them, and then choosing thoughts that best suit us. This isn’t about what is usually referred to as “positive thinking.” It’s about “responsible thinking” instead. And not responsible in the moral sense. Responsible in the pragmatic sense. No one is responsible for our thoughts but us.

...

In 1967 and 1968, the deadliest years of the war, I was a door gunner and crew chief on a helicopter gunship in the Mekong Delta. Our aviation company’s “slicks,” the troop-transporting aircraft, carried American and South Vietnamese infantrymen into and out of battle. Our gunships

covered those insertions, then provided close air support for the “grunts” below as they conducted their operations.

...

The greatest leader I have ever known was Harry Gawkowski. He was the pale, slight, twenty-six-year-old captain who led our gun platoon, the Mustangs. Captain Ski was Mustang Six.

He was the furthest thing from a physically imposing man, except for one thing: ...

*to be continued*

## AUTHORS' BIOS



DR. MICHAEL O'BRIEN is president of the O'Brien Group, an executive coaching consultancy with an international clientele. Widely recognized for his expertise in the role played by personal psychology in leadership and change management, he has conducted hundreds of seminars and given numerous keynote presentations on the subject in the course of a twenty-five-year career. He has contributed articles to many professional publications and is author of *Profit from Experience: A guide to knowing yourself and influencing others* (1995, now in a fourth edition, Sombrero Press). Dr. O'Brien's clientele includes such companies as NYNEX, Bayer, AT&T, Xerox, Prudential, Convergys, Sun Life, Catholic Healthcare Partners, New York Life, Procter & Gamble and many others. He holds a Master's Degree in Education and a Doctorate in Human Resources Development.

LARRY SHOOK is a veteran journalist, publisher, editor and communications consultant. He has written for such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*. His reporting has won several of the nation's top journalism awards. He co-authored *Profit from Experience* with Dr. O'Brien.

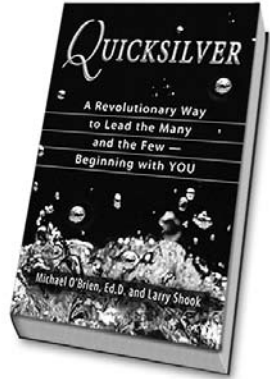


## FREE QUICKSILVER

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK** is to promote conscious leadership at every level as rapidly as possible.

Accordingly, deep price discounts are available for bulk purchases; free copies are offered to those who give the book as a gift; portions of the text may be read for free online. For information, please see *Quicksilver* at [www.ObrienGroup.us](http://www.ObrienGroup.us) and [www.SombreroPress.com](http://www.SombreroPress.com).

*Quicksilver*, as well as *Profit From Experience*, can also be obtained through BookMasters, (800) 266-5564.



## ARE YOU DANGEROUSLY NORMAL?

Most of the world's catastrophes don't come from "mistakes." Wars, NASA space tragedies, global economic meltdowns—they all have one thing in common. *All are caused by normal thinking.*

*Quicksilver* shows that humanity now suffers from a learning disorder that threatens our future. As a result, leaders must develop a shape-shifting ability to continuously adjust themselves and their organizations to quicksilver conditions.

This book looks at the failed leadership behind the 2008 economic crisis, from the perspective of the fast-changing digital world, which has outpaced habits of mind. It focuses on neuroscience and cognitive psychology to propose a set of practices aimed at coping with problems of the digital age.

Whether you lead a nation, a great organization, a team, an important relationship, or just your own life, the biggest challenge you face is learning how to think differently, on purpose, when the situation demands. *Quicksilver* will teach you how to:

- Inoculate yourself against self-defeating, normal thinking.
- Systematically neutralize fear, which comes in many guises.
- Create the "presence" of a leader who exudes the personal courage and integrity that people will want to emulate and follow.

*"Quicksilver offers the most brilliant analysis I've seen of the economic meltdown of 2008. It shows how unconsciousness made leaders blind to warnings of danger all around them. Quicksilver helps leaders wake up."*

—MICHAEL D. CONNELLY, M.A., J.D., FACHE, Pres. & CEO, Catholic Healthcare Partners



[www.SombreroPress.com](http://www.SombreroPress.com)

COVER DESIGN BY DOTY ALBERTINE  
COVER PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES

