

Foreword by the series editor

“Midlife is a particularly good time for us to take control of our trajectories.”

– *Personal Leadership in the Age of No Retirement* (2025, p. 42).

Midlife or “new phase of adulthood”? Yes. However, this book is also a wonderful invitation to aim for sustainable personal leadership during our entire life!

“This might not really be a book on leadership ...” Yes it is!

When Tatiana and Kelly approached me with their book idea, they more or less started with: “Well, Bernd, this might not really be a book on leadership, but would you be interested in reading the proposal...?”. If leading yourself is not the training, developmental process and resource to lead others and also have others in your sphere benefit from sustainable personal leadership, I don’t know what is.

I read *Personal Leadership in the Age of No Retirement* for the first time in full during a period where I was in one of my regular routines of reflecting on my trajectory, working on what Tatiana and Kelly so powerfully call “Self, Inc.” The book is infectious. You cannot let go. It is asking in a gentle but also assertive way the questions we might have thought of but formulated differently; questions we know we need to ask but shied away from, because we think they are too complicated, painful or overwhelming, but are actually rewarding and empowering in the authors’ language; or questions we were not aware that we should or can ask about ourselves. The book is a great invitation to work on your own trajectories in different spheres of life that all hang together.

To do so introduces and provides a range of concepts, ideas, challenges and tools that help guide you through the phase of midlife or a new stage of adulthood. Even the conversation about how we look differently at our life stages, journeys, trajectories is already a great nudge to shake up one’s own perception. Retirement is a relatively new idea. Ageing has often a rather negative connotation. Turning this around to name it an opportunity for “midlife empowerment” that challenges our own biases and blind spots on ageing is a refreshing perspective.

The aspiration to capture “the new midlife”, what this can mean and how it is changing, gives the reader practical tools and but also the language to access, learn and grow through these exciting years or decades. While my children call me ancient to wind me up, I will respond in the future by saying I am in a “new phase of adulthood”!

Linking this phase to self-leadership provides the reader agency that many in busy and compressed lives, often perceived as controlled by others, might want to regain based on this book’s solid research, experiences and the invitation to work on the book’s key ideas and suggestions.

Beyond the focus on people in the phase of adulthood, the ideas and practices in the Sustainable Personal Leadership model are helpful in all phases of life. When

does your personal work on purpose, identities, life domains or personal resources really start? The earlier the better.

A book for real challenges and puzzles

This book series is about making a difference and offering solutions to real world problems. What is the point otherwise of having a book series and asking writers and readers to invest their time and energy? And this book is spot on. It tickles and positively irritates you because you know very well that it is time to explore and lead your personal trajectory.

The way Tatiana and Kelly have designed the book makes it also actionable. It is difficult not to start reflecting, not to start working on the activities in the book, and not to draw conclusions as you go along. And that is the sign of a relevant and impactful book.

Personal Leadership in the Age of No Retirement is your book if you aim to strengthen your ability to change and adapt yourself and your lives proactively and in response to new aspirations and realities. How about becoming a stronger activist and less a bystander for your own destiny? In turn, this will have generative ripple effects for other lives in your vicinity. If we dial forward 10 years, I am keen to learn to whom, how and why this book made a difference. I am more than certain it will.

While my own conversations and struggles of recalibration continue ..., Tatiana and Kelly, thank you for bringing this exciting book to the series. We would have a huge gap without your work.

Bernd Vogel
Henley-on-Thames, UK
September 2024