A leader is a *brand* and like a brand, leaders and their organizations are built from the inside out. When we say, “I like the way that person thinks,” we make a judgment about something broader than a style of leadership, more than a set of leadership characteristics and behaviors, and deeper than a way of leading. We judge the way a person thinks. This goes well beyond a style or approach; it’s more telling and more robust. It is about a leader’s way of seeing, thinking, and interpreting meaning for their organization—each at the foundation of what’s inside a leader. This leader embodies the brand promise and its values and, as such, sets the tone and direction for the organization.

Becoming a leader in balance calls for two essential new habits of the mind—fundamental shifts in ways of thinking—a shift from emphasis on control to balance and from ways of behaving to ways of thinking. Rather than teaching the external techniques of how to move your mouth (ways of speaking) or move your body (ways of behaving), leaders in balance concentrate attention on the inside first—how to move your mind with different ways of thinking, seeing, and understanding—the factors that establish the foundation and pave the way for a leader’s decisions and subsequent actions.

To enrich our thinking about leaders in balance with real experiences, Kucia asked leaders to reflect on the topic of collaboration and leadership, and individual and organizational...
learning and change. He then listened for common patterns in their ways of thinking, seeing, and understanding situations. He was listening carefully to leader’s responses looking to integrate and organize the way leaders think and reflect across the image of a leader in balance—a fully integrated person who is simultaneously a person who is a critical thinker and reflective strategist (head); is a moral and ethical builder of trust (heart); and who shares power and authority and encourages innovation (hand).

Creating this image of an individual who thinks with the head of a strategist, makes choices with a moral and ethical heart, and leads with the hand of a collaborative leader may seem lofty and is rarely found, but given the challenging role of leadership today, Kucia believes setting high standards and thinking in terms of the ideal is both warranted and demanded by constituencies around the globe.

Kucia also listened for an awareness of the leader as brand and the importance of trust as they shared and explored the ideas, observations, and challenges from an intellectual and experiential perspective that have led them to their own evolving personal brand of leadership.

**The Ways of Thinking of Leaders in Balance: A Brand of Collaborative Leader**

“The leader’s way of seeing things has special weight. Leaders manage meaning for one group, offering a way to interpret or make sense of and so react emotionally to a given situation,” according to the authors of *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence.* Leadership in balance is not a style of leadership; rather it is leadership with a personal style. Leadership in balance is more than a set of leadership characteristics and behaviors and it is deeper than a way of leading. Instead, leadership in balance is a way of thinking, a way of understanding and being that forms the foundation for a leader’s decisions and actions. A leader in balance is a robust brand of leader best suited for guiding a living organization of talented people in a contemporary, global, and ever-changing world. Just as a brand is built