

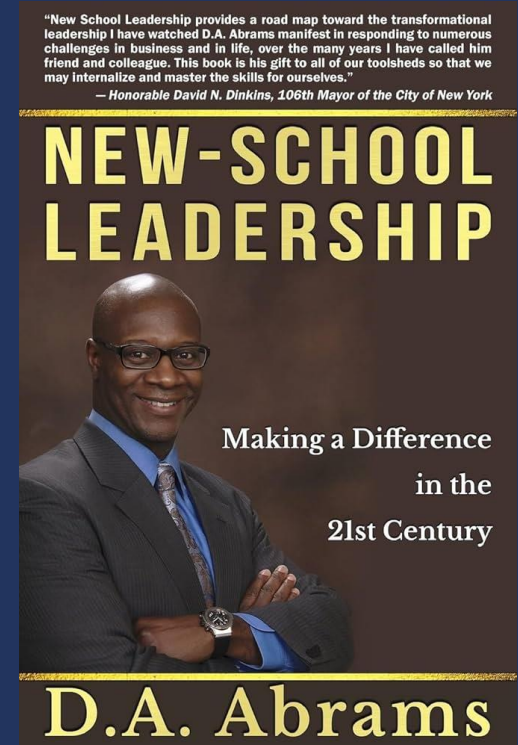
PROMENA's 5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL VIRTUAL PUBLISHING SUMMIT

August 17, 2026

# NEW-SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Making a Difference in the 21st Century

D.A. Abrams — Author • Speaker • Strategist • Coach



D.A. Abrams

New-School Leadership

DAAbrams.net



## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

# D.A. ABRAMS

**Speaker • Author • Strategist • Coach**

- Author of **New-School Leadership**, *Where is Your Why?*, and *Diversity & Inclusion* —> six influential leadership books
- Creator of the **WHY Ecosystem** -> 6 purpose-driven platforms for growth
- Executive coach, keynote speaker, and former Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer at the US Tennis Association (USTA)
- Champion of purpose-driven leadership, diversity, inclusion, and human-centered organizational transformation

**6**

Leadership Books

**WHY**

Ecosystem of Tools & Solutions

**30+**

Years “Making It Happen”



## OLD-SCHOOL

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- Authority & command-and-control management
- Positional power decides — title trumps talent
- Change resisted; stability and uniformity prized
- Golden Rule: treat others as **YOU** want to be treated

MANAGE TASKS.

## NEW-SCHOOL

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- Influence, empathy & enrollment-based leadership
- Purpose & WHY drive action — not title
- Ahead of the curve — embraces change and innovation
- Platinum Rule: treat others as **THEY** want to be treated

INSPIRE PEOPLE.



# THE FRAMEWORK THE LEADERSHIP MODEL

Ten traits of the new-school leader — spelling the word itself.

**L**

LIFELONG LEARNER

**E**

ENGAGEMENT

**A**

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

**D**

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**E**

EMPATHY

**R**

RELATIONSHIP MGMT

**S**

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

**H**

HIGH ENERGY

**I**

INFLUENCE & ENROLLMENT

**P**

PLATINUM RULE





## LIFELONG LEARNER

### TRAIT 01

# LEADERS ARE ENDLESSLY CURIOUS AND COMMITTED TO CONSTANT GROWTH.

## 1 PERVASIVE LEARNING MINDSET

Growth is woven into every day, every role, every conversation — a collaborative, continuous, community-based approach.

## 2 SPEED OF NEED

Learn what you need, when you need it — just in time, not just in case. Know where to find critical information on any topic.

## 3 CURIOSITY AS DISCIPLINE

Ask more than you answer; treat every challenge as a lesson. Inspire your team to continue their own learning journey.

**“LEADERS ARE MADE RATHER THAN BORN.” — WARREN BENNIS**





# FULLY ENGAGED LEADERS INSPIRE TEAMS — PRESENCE, NOT JUST POSITION.

## AUTHENTIC CONNECTION

Real relationships beat scripted interactions. People follow leaders who show up genuinely — vulnerability builds trust, not weakness.

## ENGAGEMENT DRIVES PERFORMANCE

When leaders are all-in, teams mirror the commitment and results follow. Culture flows from the leader — never up from the rank-and-file.

# ALL-IN

Engaged leaders create engaged teams — energy and commitment cascade downward through every level of the organization.





## REACT

Old-school: wait for change, then scramble to catch up. Always one step behind the market.



## ADAPT

Respond quickly once trends appear — better, but still behind. Reactive, not proactive leadership.



## ANTICIPATE

New-school: read the signals early, embrace innovation, lead the change before others see it coming.

**THIS IS THE GOAL**

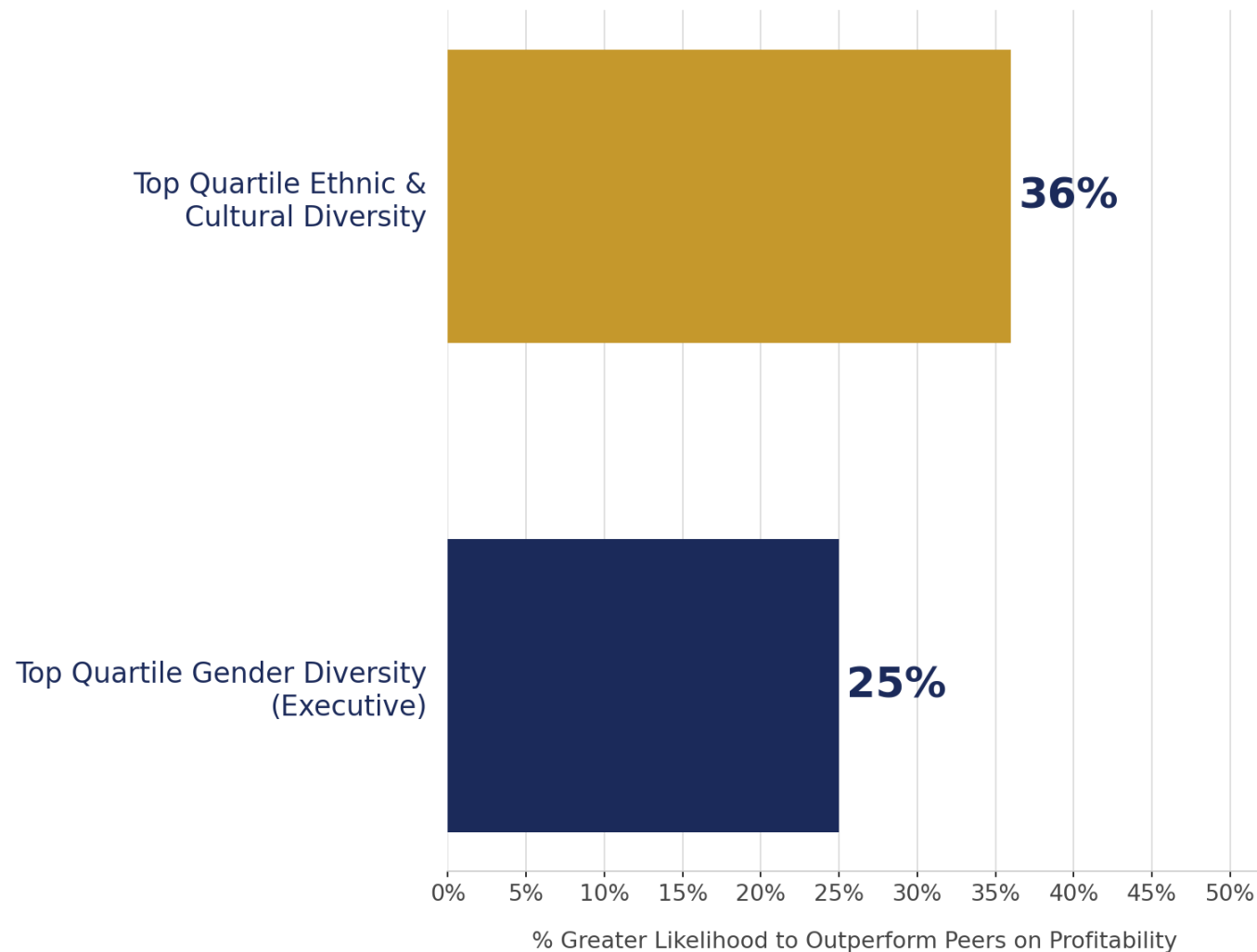
**DON'T WAIT FOR CHANGE — SEE IT COMING AND GET THERE FIRST.**



## DIVERSE TEAMS OUTPERFORM.

- Inclusive culture is a competitive advantage, not a compliance checkbox.
- Different perspectives sharpen decisions and spark innovation at every level.
- Belonging unlocks discretionary effort across the whole team.

D.A. Abrams served as Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer at the US Tennis Association (USTA) 2012–2019, developing the landmark “All Hands on Deck” Plan of Attack.



Source: McKinsey & Company, *Diversity Wins* (2020)





E

## UNDERSTAND YOUR TEAM MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES.

**Emotional intelligence is leadership currency.** The most effective leaders feel their team's reality, not just observe it from a distance.

**Listen to feel, not just to reply.** Slow down enough to truly hear what is being said — and what isn't.

R

## BUILD AND NURTURE AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS AT EVERY LEVEL.

**Trust compounds over time.** Relationships built on authenticity and consistency become your greatest leadership asset.

**Connect up, down, and across** — not just upward. New-school leaders invest in relationships with everyone, not just superiors.



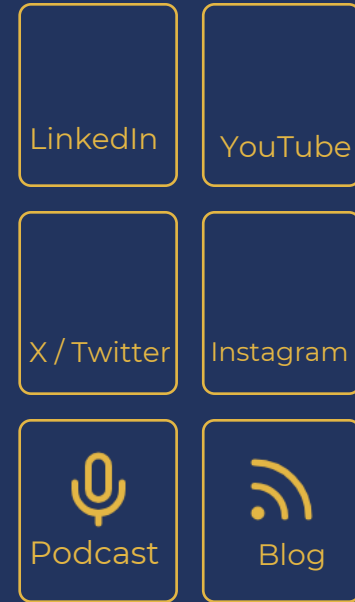
# YOUR PLATFORM IS YOUR PODIUM.

## COMMUNICATE VISION AT SCALE

Digital platforms let leaders broadcast purpose and direction beyond the boardroom — your audience is global, not just your org chart.

## BUILD INFLUENCE & CREDIBILITY

A consistent, authentic digital presence compounds credibility over time. Leaders who show up online lead conversations; those who don't cede the floor.



**ONE VOICE, MANY CHANNELS.**



H

## HIGH ENERGY

Bring passion and positive energy to everything you lead.

Your mood, attitude, and enthusiasm set the cultural temperature for the entire organization.

**ENERGY IS CONTAGIOUS — IT SETS THE CULTURE.**

I

## INFLUENCE & ENROLLMENT

Lead by inspiring others to want to follow — not through positional authority or mandates. People move mountains for leaders who move them first.

**ENROLL PEOPLE IN THE WHY; THEY'LL CARRY THE HOW.**



TRAIT 10 / 10 — THE PLATINUM RULE

P

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Golden Rule — treat others as **YOU** want to be treated.

**PLATINUM RULE — TREAT OTHERS AS **THEY** WANT TO BE TREATED.**

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Meet people on their terms — the ultimate act of empathy in leadership. Understanding how others want to be treated requires curiosity, listening, and genuine care.



# THE MUST-HAVES

Five non-negotiables every new-school leader carries.

1

## VISION

See the future clearly and paint it compellingly for others.

2

## PURPOSE (WHY)

Anchor every decision in a compelling reason that others can feel.

3

## PASSION

Care visibly — it fuels the team and gives permission to others to care too.

4

## COMMUNICATION

Make the message land, up and down — clarity is a leadership superpower.

5

## MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Turn vision into disciplined execution — great vision without management is just a dream.

**PURPOSE IS THE KEYSTONE — THE WHY THAT HOLDS THE OTHER FOUR TOGETHER.**





## DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Master the platforms where influence now lives — reach, voice, and brand at scale. The leaders with a digital footprint own the conversation.



### UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

See patterns before they become mainstream.



### ABILITY TO HANDLE CHANGE

Stay steady and adaptive amid disruption.



### GREAT LISTENING SKILLS

Hear what's said — and what isn't.



### LIKE-ABLE

Approachability opens doors authority can't.



SINCE 2014 (Especially after October 2020)  
**LEADERSHIP, EVOLVED**



The new operating reality.

**REMOTE / HYBRID**

Distributed teams | post-COVID

**AI & AUTOMATION**

Human-centered leadership  
matters more than ever.

**DEI MANDATE**

No longer the case.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

Must be factored in.

**PURPOSE-DRIVEN**

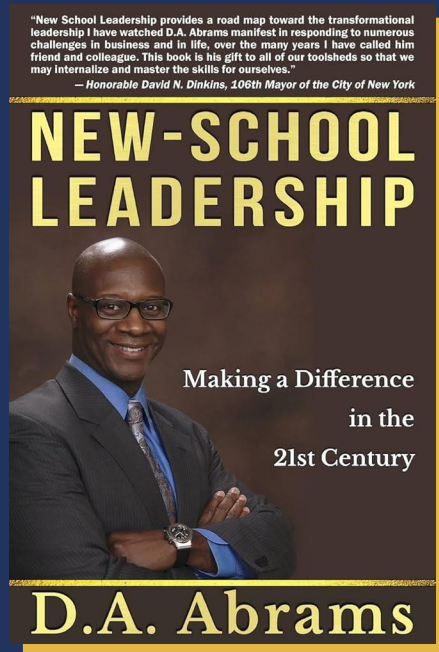
WHY movement & Ecosystem  
accelerates.



**D.A. Abrams**

**Leadership Evolved Since 2014**

[DAAbrams.net](https://DAAbrams.net)



START WITH THE BOOK.

## 1 ASSESS

Take the **free 5-minute WHY Assessment** at DAAbrams.net — reveal your core purpose, natural drivers, and the strategic bottleneck holding you back.

## 2 ENROLL

Join the **New-School Leadership online course**; explore Executive Briefs and Private Coaching for personalized guidance.

## 3 ENGAGE

Dive into the **WHY Ecosystem**: WHY-OS, Why2Wealth, Why2TimeMgmt, Why2ClearPath, Why2Decision, and Clarity Atlas — six platforms for every dimension of growth.

START FREE AT DAABRAMS.NET — TAKE THE WHY ASSESSMENT TODAY.





QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

# THANK YOU.

# LET'S CONNECT.

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Ask me anything — then keep the conversation going.

[WWW.DAABRAMS.NET](http://WWW.DAABRAMS.NET)

Free WHY Assessment • Courses • Coaching • Books • Speaking

