



PREPARED EXCLUSIVELY FOR FFI MEMBERS

Mindful Exponential Leadership: An interview with Ismael Cala

OCTOBER 4, 2019



We are pleased to present an exclusive interview with the closing keynote speaker, Ismael Cala, at the [annual global conference](#) in Miami, October 23–25. If you missed the interview with opening speaker Kris Verburgh, MD, go [here](#). We hope you enjoy this unique member benefit.

FFI: THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THE CONCEPTS OF “MINDFULNESS” AND “EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP” TODAY. WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN TO YOU? HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF VUCA (VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AND AMBIGUITY) AS IT APPLIES TO YOUR WORK?

Ismael Cala: Both mindfulness and exponential leadership are the platform where any current leader must outline his or her global vision; it is the key that will guide the leader to be updated and mindful. Being *mindful* implies an awareness of the present moment to perceive the changes and the speed in which a VUCA world moves on. *Exponentiality* comes from the overwhelming growth of technologies in a short-term period. A current leader should acknowledge these two concepts in order to face this new world.

My determination to help people to understand the VUCA world comes from the disruption we see around us. I am concerned that so many people—including those with high corporate positions and many stake holders—have on a mindset based on a perspective of life that was only possible 50 years ago.

The old paradigm of studying, getting a job, and then staying there for the next 30 or 40 years of your life has changed—that does not work within our current world dynamic. We must learn to unlearn many things; we must prepare ourselves and acknowledge that the digital era has arrived and has changed our lives forever. If we do not understand this or are resistant to this reality, unexpected changes and speed will knock us down.

The greatest consequence of the VUCA world is that whatever we learn or get used to today will probably be obsolete in a year. This is what a mindful exponential leader must be aware of in order to avoid being stuck in, and over, time—moving forward in the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of our actual world, without perishing in the attempt.

FFI: AS SOMEONE WHO HAS DONE A PIVOT AND TRANSITION IN HIS OWN PROFESSIONAL CAREER TO A MORE MINDFUL EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS TRYING TO MAKE A SIMILAR PROFESSIONAL CHANGE? CAN YOU GIVE THEM YOUR TOP FIVE TIPS?

IC: The first thing to do is to discover what moves you, what the Japanese call “ikigai”. What motivates you to wake up every day? What are you really passionate about? And following this passion, how can you serve your community? When you understand that from your position as a leader in a voracious world you can make a difference, it then means that you understand everything.

So, my tips would be:

1. Meditate, get to know yourself. Listen to your inner voice.
2. Develop positive habits to keep a healthy body and mind.
3. Read and learn as much as you can. Do not stay just with what you already know.
4. Upgrade yourself constantly. Last year’s performance is this year’s baseline. Keep raising your own bar —permanently.
5. Use your ego to be of service to your community.

FFI: YOU HAVE SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME WITH FAMILY ENTERPRISE OWNERS, ADVISORS, AND EXECUTIVES IN COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. ARE THERE COMMON CHALLENGES AND SHIFTS THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED? DO YOU THINK THE MINDFULNESS APPROACH MITIGATES THESE CHALLENGES—IF SO, HOW?

IC: Beyond cultural differences that exist between countries or communities, there are also common challenges and factors as natural consequences of living in a technological world, since we are all immersed in an increasingly globalized world.

According to investigations and research by the HeartMath Institute, which studies the heart-mind connection, living in a constant mindfulness will let you be aware of yourself while also putting your attention to listening, in order to connect with others.

Ironically, although we are living in the century of communications, humans are less open to communicating with their relatives or near ones. Mindfulness may open the window where we can express our feelings with total confidence and empathy.

FFI: IN THAT YOUR OWN FIRM, CALA ENTERPRISES, IS A FAMILY ENTERPRISE, HOW HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED AND ROLLED OUT YOUR IDEAS INTERNALLY TO ADDRESS VUCA AND REMAIN RELEVANT?

IC: In Cala Enterprises we have been internally applying what we call the C.A.L.A. Life Method—that means Constant Awareness for Leadership in Action—because one of the main premises of the VUCA world says that you cannot fall asleep, waiting for things simply to happen.

If we want to be world-class leaders, we must be at the forefront, studying, understanding, but especially, listening to our environment, because it is the most reliable way to adjust and correct the course.

FFI: PLEASE TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE INITIATIVE YOU BEGAN IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, ISMAEL CALA INFLUENCERS CIRCLE. WHAT IS A “MASTERMIND GROUP”—AND WHO IS IN THE FIRST CIRCLE?

IC: The Influencers Circle is a group of leaders in different areas that want, as we want at Cala Enterprises, to keep growing, moving forward and scaling to a higher level. We organize monthly meetings and coaching sessions for them, where they receive masterclasses from great world-class mentors such as Marie Diamond, Carl Honoré, Don Miguel Ruiz, and most recently, we had an interview with Robin Sharma. These are all great masters that enrich the Influencers Circle with knowledge and learning tools to lead them to a higher level and make them grow up together as a community. Furthermore, our trips, that I call “tourism with consciousness,” are also part of the development plan that we have created to help these influencers reconsider a simple pleasure trip and transform it into a trip for growth and spiritual experiences of personal development and expansion.

Some of these destinations are India, Bali-Indonesia, Machu Pichu, Israel, Australia and other places where we gather to explore their culture and achieve a higher consciousness state.



Ismael Cala is a life and business strategist, best-selling author on leadership, entrepreneurship, and personal development. He is ambassador to the concept of Corporate Happiness in Latin America. He hosted “Cala,” a prime time show on CNN en Español, for more than 5 years, and *The New York Times* has referred to him as “the Latino Larry King.” Currently, Cala is considered to be one of the most important journalists of the American continent, as his message about social entrepreneurship, mindfulness, and wellbeing has impacted millions of people that follow his work through his books, seminars, workshops and conferences. He is President and Founder of Cala Enterprises Corporation and Ismael Cala Foundation.

Cala Enterprises is a content platform specializing in learning experiences based on proven methodologies. Cala Enterprises creates inspirational and life-altering content for their conferences, seminars, online courses, best-selling book, media productions, and retreats, all focused on topics including leadership, motivation, personal growth, and design thinking. Cala Enterprises strives to empower people as well as help them discover their strengths and maximize their full potential. Whether the end users are corporate leaders, start-up entrepreneurs, educators, or agents of change, Cala Enterprises seeks to continue growing organically and strategically while optimizing the positive impact it has proven to have in the lives of millions of people.

PREVIOUS EDITION



Looks like we missed a few titles in our [August Reading](#) edition of *FFI on Friday*, so here is an update. Please help us continue this periodic feature by letting us know about books we might have missed.

They don't have to be in English!

[READ MORE](#)

📅 DATES TO REMEMBER

OCT
23-25

Annual Global conference in Miami
[VIEW COMPLETE PROGRAM AND REGISTER](#)
[VIEW HOTEL RESERVATIONS](#)

NOV
14

NYC regional meeting | 4:30PM-7:00PM
Host: J.P. Morgan, 390 Madison Avenue, New York City
Program: Master Class with Justin Blake, Edelman, “Implications on Trust for Family Businesses”
[VIEW DETAILS](#)

NOV
19

GEN Alumni Webinar Series
What’s in a Name: Mediation, Facilitation, or Consultation?

NOV
22

Building Family Business Boards for the Long Term
STEP Business Families Special Interest Group in London
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