



## Book Summary:

### **The Third Opinion**

#### *How Successful Leaders Use Outside Insight to Create Superior Results*

By Saj-nicole A. Joni, Ph. D.

For three years, Dr. Joni interviewed hundreds of executives and their advisers and thinking partners in order to understand these issues in depth. Her research has led to two insights that form the heart of this book:

**Insight 1:** Leadership today requires three new habits -- Habit of Mind, Habit of Relationship, and Habit of Focus. Used together these Habits will enable you to build a powerful leadership circle and take advantage of the benefits of outside insight. These Habits are vitally important to the kind of leader you will be. They will distinguish your leadership and your career trajectory.

**Insight 2:** You can start developing the three Habits and your advisory network at any time during your career. It's important to develop and use the three Habits in concert. While everyone will use them differently, there are guidelines to help you focus on perfecting the various parts of each habit as your leadership progresses.

**Habit of Mind** -- The author makes the point that today's leaders must master a new level of thinking and she calls it exponential thinking. Exponential thinking allows you to see all sides of a complex issue; it's the process of examining context, looking for interrelationships, exploring assumptions, and asking questions that reveal the full truth and potential of a situation.

**Habit of Relationship** -- Leaders today must assemble a new kind of leadership team, one that ensures that they undertake the right kind of exploratory thinking and are challenged by multiple perspectives. Dr. Joni suggests that this team must be made up of an action team and an inquiry team that are capable of translating exponential thinking into useful action.

**Habit of Focus** -- Leaders must have the skill and discipline to focus on the essential non-urgent issues. Mastery of the Habit of Focus is to function effectively in your high-pressure environment and make progress on the big, longer-term issues that still need your attention.

No matter where you stand on the corporate ladder, being a leader in today's business world is a tough, sometimes even isolating experience. Of course, there are many people you can turn to for advice. First, you'll certainly get an opinion from your closest co-workers. You may then turn to colleagues (inside or outside the company) for a second opinion. But there is another opinion - the third opinion - that most people never ask for, and it's the most important one of all.

What can your inner circle offer that other networks can't? Outside insight -- the most trust-worthy, loyal, unbiased perspective that exists. You can't create the undivided loyalty of outside insight solely within the confines of your organization, and it can not be bought. Rather, it's the result of developing powerful

reciprocal relationships. The Third Opinion is the first book to examine how anyone can develop this vital but often overlooked key to reaching and sustaining peak performance.

**Saj-nicole A. Joni, PhD.**, is the founder of Cambridge International Group Ltd., a high-level advisory services firm. She is widely regarded as one of the leading third-opinion advisers to executives around the world. She has more than twenty-five years of experience as a senior executive and adviser in industries as varied as finance, high tech, energy, and health care. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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