

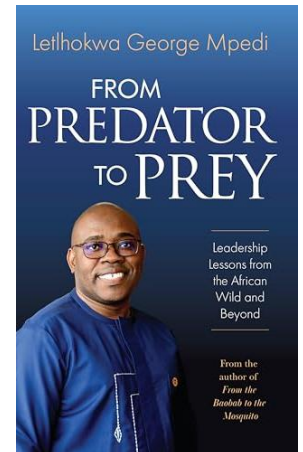


Title **From Predator to Prey**
Author **Letlhokwa George Mpedi**
Published 2025 by Tracey McDonald Publishers
Review By **Christelle Faul Marais (Founder and Director, Lucidum)**
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Lessons For
 Directors, Prescribed Officers, Executives
 Governance Officers, Company Secretaries
 Ethics Officers, Risk Managers, Compliance Managers
 Audit Professionals
 Strategy and Sustainability Professionals
 Line Managers

Relevance	Overall Rating
8	6,2
5	
5	
3	
8	
8	



Synopsis

From Predator to Prey is one of the most relevant reads for everyone trying to find a space to contribute to the modern African economy. The book draws leadership lessons from the behaviour of wildlife in nature, using lionesses' silent cooperation during a hunt, elephant matriarchal structures, and wild dogs' territorial instincts to challenge conventional, top-down models of authority. Prof Mpedi frames the book around the psychological experience of feeling hunted rather than in control, asking what it means to lead when the world keeps casting you as prey, and how a leader moves from constantly scanning for danger to scanning for possibility instead. In societies where intergenerational trauma over centuries (from pre-colonial times, through foreign exploitation, to struggling to cope with the realities of poverty and inequality) has produced individuals that face seemingly unsurmountable odds, this book feels like a warm embrace: calling on each one of us to recognise ourselves as worthy leaders, and giving us the comfort that if we look out for each other, there is no need to feel like impostors. Each chapter pairs an observation from nature with a reflective exercise; noticing when urgency is real versus imagined, auditing which collaborations are mutually nourishing, or practising calm authority in a meeting rather than proving oneself. The throughline is an African, interdependence-based idea of 'ubuntu leadership': natural systems balance hierarchy with collective decision-making, and organisations that only concentrate authority in one dominant figure are more brittle than they want to be. For strategy and line-managers, the lesson is that resilience is built the way a pack or herd builds it, through distributed vigilance and mutual reliance, not through one leader absorbing all decisions and risks alone; as well as the blame when things go wrong.

Key Concept: Controlled

Power Leaders' capacity to hold real strength (authority, seniority, or force) while exercising it with restraint, care, and precision, motivating others to breach their own comfort zones to achieve greater heights, but protecting rather than harming those it's directed toward.

Quotes: 'What does it mean to lead when the world keeps casting you as the hunted one? How do you move from scanning for danger to scanning for possibility?' 'Practice noticing when urgency is real and when it is imagined.' 'If you stopped seeing yourself as prey, what kind of leader would you dare to become?' 'Leadership is not about being in charge; it is about taking care of those in your charge.' 'Despite having the ability to crush bones or overpower prey, they use their mouths to carry their young with extreme care. A lioness will gently lift her cub by the scruff of the neck, exerting just enough pressure to hold the cub securely without causing harm. Crocodiles can be seen delicately transporting their hatchlings between their teeth or in their mouths, ensuring their safety. Similarly, cheetahs and leopards often move their young to safer locations by gently grasping them in their jaws. These behaviours are more than just survival mechanisms; they are profound demonstrations of controlled power.'

Practical Tips

- Consider whether your organisation relies on one dominant decision-maker to absorb all the risk, or whether vigilance and authority are genuinely distributed in the interest of debottlenecking pressure and creativity as well as succession building.
- Consider auditing your organisation's key partnerships and collaborations the way the book suggests auditing personal relationships: are they mutually nourishing, or is your organisation giving more than it receives without realising it?

Think About

- Avoid confusing constant vigilance with effective leadership. Real urgency is different from imagined urgency, and leaders who cannot tell the difference burn out their organisations along with themselves.
- Understand that calm, steady authority (as opposed to visibly proving oneself in every meeting) reassures teams under pressure (whether in the home, in society, and in the workplace).
- Stop operating from a defensive 'prey' mindset (scanning for threats) and start leading from possibility instead (allowing others space to make honest mistakes within the boundaries of ethical conduct).
- Ask how much of your actions and reactions are driven by a 'prey' mentality – allowing opportunities to pass you by because all your mental capacity is absorbed in defending what only exists in your mind.
- Critically rethink your own leadership paradigm in context of the tenets of ubuntu leadership.

Contact Us

www.lucidum.africa

Christelle Marais
 +27 (0) 82 453 7948
christelle@lucidum.africa

Jacques Marais
 +27 (0) 72 398 6913
jacques@lucidum.africa