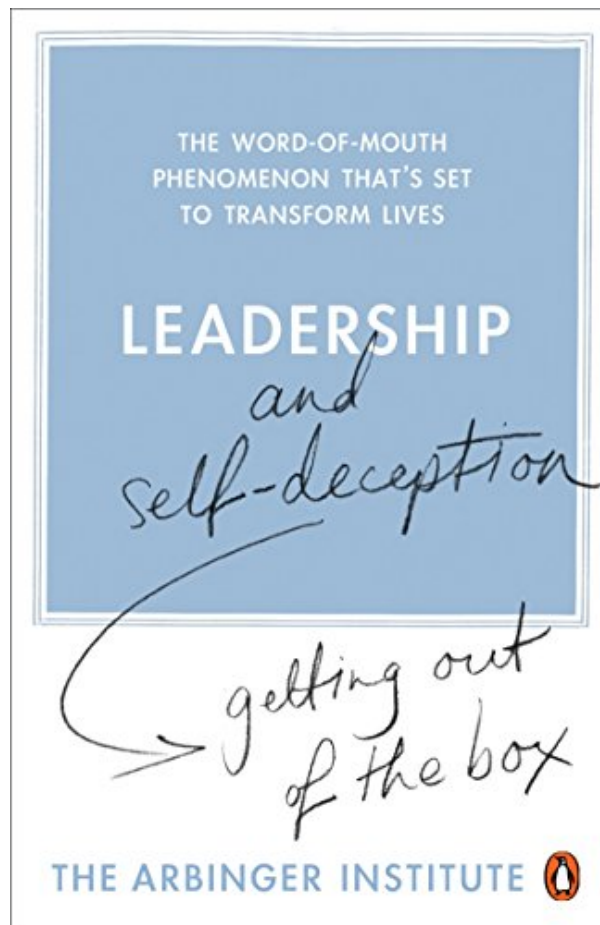
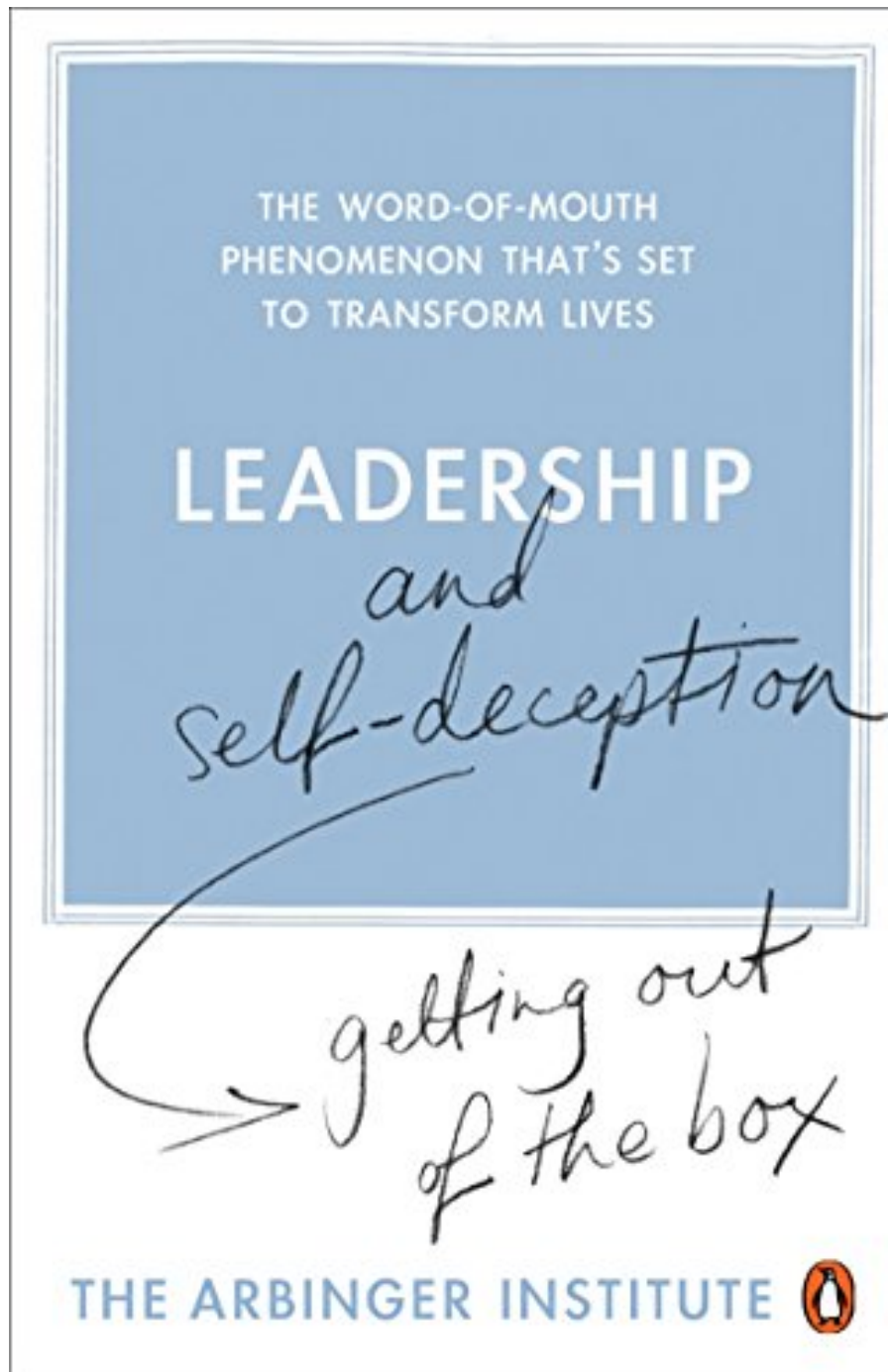


LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DECEPTION: GETTING OUT OF THE BOX BY ARBINGER INSTITUTE



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Amazon.com Review

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While the writing won't make John Updike lose any sleep, the story entertainingly does the job of pulling the reader in and making a potentially abstruse argument quite enjoyable. The authors have a much better ear for dialogue than is typical of the genre (the book is largely dialogue), although a certain didactic tone creeps in now and then. But ultimately it's a hopeful, even inspiring read that flows along nicely and conveys a message that more than a few managers need to hear. --Pat McGill

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You might think you are a people person. But do you really treat others well? And how can you improve your dealings with those around you? Be prepared to have your world turned upside down and open your eyes to a whole new way of living and working. Through a series of entertaining stories, this astonishing book will show you how most of us are not fulfilling our potential - in our personal lives and at work - because of 'self-deception'. It will show you how to escape your box of self-deception, and change for the better in a lasting way: don't focus on what others are doing wrong. Do focus on what you can do to help; don't worry whether others are helping you. Do worry whether you are helping others; and, don't try to be perfect. Do try to be better. By following this book's advice, you can deepen your personal happiness, strengthen your relationships, improve your leadership skills, build teamwork - and increase your success in everything you choose to pursue.

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Features

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Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Useful as far as it goes, but doesn't tackle the hard questions.

By Amazon Customer

The fundamental idea here is a useful one (and is echoed in the prequel, *The Anatomy of Peace*, that was, I gather written afterward). It's actually very similar to the points made by most of the world's largest religions—and much folk wisdom—about relating to other human beings. See others as human beings, not as resources for you to consume. Understand that everyone has hopes and dreams and is the star of their very own little movie. Have empathy. Turn the other cheek. And realize that when you harden your heart toward others, they probably cannot help but harden their heart toward you—and everyone then has a worse week. And so on.

The power of the Arbinger books is in illustrating in more concrete terms, for those that have not been exposed to these ideas or that have struggled to understand them, just **why** the principles laid out in everything from the New Testament to the Tao Te Ching to the Buddhist sutras actually do seem to make life better and to create wise people that others admire—how it all works at the moment-by-moment, interaction-by-interaction level.

So in a way, if traditional religion or spirituality leaves you cold or doubtful, or you've never thought about traditional religion or spirituality much as methods and practices, these Arbinger books can help to illuminate things by painting a concrete, reason-based picture of why these approaches to life work and seem to multiply happiness.

What's missing for me is depth. In particular, a discussion of how to navigate the limits of what these books describe. The problem with these Arbinger books is that they silently skirt the issue of evil. I don't mean evil people, necessarily, but evil as a circumstance, as a practical problem in the world.

These books encourage us to lower our resistance to others, let down our boundaries, value those around us as people, and in a sense, turn the other cheek, etc. And they suggest that in fact, this kind of generosity has the knock-on effect of encouraging others to do the same, of allowing us all to be our best for each other, and to focus together on what we can achieve as a team—as a couple, as a group, as an organization—rather than being focused on protecting our own interests at the expense of others (and thereby encouraging others to do the same at our expense).

Which is great.

But what they don't consider almost at all—not in any way with stakes—is what the limits are. The question of responsibility to self is mostly glossed over. In this, they are **too** like the world's many and assorted scriptures. It's fine for the New Testament to suggest that we must be willing to climb on the cross and be crucified if necessary as a kind of moral proposition. The New Testament is presenting its account as a metaphor, as an illustration, in the abstract, of how far we can go, in the ideal, to open ourselves to others and refuse to be a part of the problem. But this doesn't really work in a modern, practical book that claims to

offer help for real-world organizations, families, etc.

In short, the Arbinger books, like various forms of scripture, suggest that we open ourselves to others, let go of ourselves, and focus generously on the humanity of those around us without concern for our own well-being.

And they suggest that in so doing, others will do the same. They also suggest that when others treat us poorly, the right answer is not to worry about it—because their actions are theirs, and our actions are ours. Even if someone else treats us poorly, in other words, we don't have to do the same toward them, and in time, our habit of treating others well and valuing their humanity can be as contagious as their aggression or negativity seem to be. Rather than "convert" us to nastiness, by being generous, caring people that are considerate of others and doing what we think is ethically and interpersonally, we influence them to do the same.

But in the real world, there are limits to this theory. In a marriage, some spouses are abusive spouses. Letting down one's walls and turning the other cheek and caring only about caring (and not about self defense) can lead to death for the abused spouse. Or, to use a less extreme example, in a highly negative company culture, adopting the principles of this book without care in the face of ruthless co-workers bent on advancement of all costs might lead a person to be passed over for promotions, terminated, or worse—all unjustly.

These books seem to imply that to think about oneself under either circumstance is a way of "getting into the box," of prioritizing oneself above others and of dehumanizing the others around oneself, and thus perpetuating abusive or ruthless behavior. The books do spend a moment conceding that some people "carry their boxes" with them, i.e. that perhaps that abusive person or this ruthless co-worker will continue doing what they are doing. The books suggest that it isn't our problem to focus on them, that in fact we should focus on ourselves, being as caring and considerate of others' humanity as we can.

But the books don't spend any time on the concept of self-care. Obviously, it is sort of a BFD to be killed by one's spouse, or to be pushed out of a job unjustly by a ruthless co-worker and end up unemployed. These books don't exactly suggest that if this happens, it's our own fault for not being caring enough, but they come close to suggesting that in the way that I read them. And that's a dangerous suggestion.

Because there **are** abusive people out there, there **are** ruthless people out there, and in our society as it is constructed right now, it **is** one's ethical responsibility to one's fellow human beings, one's fellow citizens, to take care of oneself—to feed oneself, to remain a viable adult, to be able to pay one's own bills, and so on. Turn the other cheek must have limits if one is not to become a ward of the state, or worse.

There is a brief discussion of what happens when other people are trying to "run you over," but it amounts, basically, to suggesting that the reason that this is happening is because you are secretly also trying to run them over, and that if you stop, they'll stop, or vice-versa.

There is really very little confrontation with the very common problem (let's put it in the book's terms) of someone else who is "in the box" and who is **also very dangerous** to you for one reason or another (intimacy, hierarchy, whatever), and who won't, regardless of what you or anyone else does climb out of their box, now or possibly ever.

What are your responsibilities to yourself? What are your responsibilities to others around you who might also be at risk as a result of such person(s) that are permanent-in-the-box-runners-over?

Most of us can understand the messages in the Arbinger books relatively quickly and easily and agree with them. Many of us have even grown up with these basic principles as a matter of common religious practice, and have never seriously doubted them.

The real difficulties and ethical problems lie in trying to figure out how to square the circle. It's one thing to say, "I love you and will let you kill me if you want" to a spouse, or to say "I am committed to you, my boss, and to this company, no matter how I get treated, and I will see you all as human beings and do my best for all of us come what may."

But what if you have children? Is it right to let a troubled spouse kill you then, even if you do so with total emotional generosity? What if you have a department of people under you that depend on you for protection from dirtier parts of the company hierarchy, that depend on their jobs to feed their families, and that depend on you keeping your job to make their lives livable at the company? The absolutely ruthless VP that wants your head, and the heads of everyone in your department purely for ego reasons, is a problem. The Arbinger books seem to suggest either that (1) you should make nice with this VP even if he doesn't make nice with you, perhaps losing your job and the jobs of those below you in the process, regardless of consequences, or (2) or that it is somehow guaranteed that if you embrace and value this VP as a human being with feelings of his own, he'll soften and see you all as human beings as well, and that's the solution, even if it takes a time and a few people having their lives destroyed before he wises up and learns the error of his ways (after all, you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs).

In short, these books are fine as far as they go, but they seriously fail to come to terms with the intractability of negative behavior and, in fact, of evil in the world, and paint an often too-rosy, and in some ways very Hollywood picture that suggests that the answer to evil is that everyone make nice, and that if evil still hangs around, it's that everyone isn't making nice genuinely enough, in their heart-of-hearts.

Well, yes. That's the problem with evil. It isn't making nice genuinely enough, in its heart of hearts.

A 2004 Journal of Clinical Psychiatry article (Grant et. al.) found that 15 percent of the population suffers from at least one serious personality disorder. There are, in other words, pathologically interactionally and ethically challenged people in *every* organization. And while they may respond finally to years of therapy with some pharmaceutical intervention as a supplement, they will most certainly not get better simply because everyone around them adopts a better and more empathetic attitude.

So while these books are adequate for, shall we say, pedestrian problems of company culture and squabbles amongst employees, they absolutely skirt past the very real and much more consequential problems of ethics that arise in the real world, in which legitimately bad, manipulative, deceitful, and dangerous individuals are spread amongst us. Instead, they simply maintain hope that these negatives result from hurt feelings, and that if we're all very nice to each other, and genuinely care, everyone will be good.

Anyone who's been around the block a few times realizes that life involves more than this. Sometimes there are very difficult decisions that have to be made. Sometimes you have to let your heart of hearts cry out in sorrow as you fire the sociopath, even though he has a wife and kids to feed and the fact of your firing him may to a terrible increase in abuse for said wife and kids. But you have to think of the wives and kids of your *other* employees, whose lives and livelihoods are being imperiled by the presence and work of said sociopath in your company. And so on. It's not always as easy as "turn the other cheek and be full of love."

Without wanting to "go Godwin," it's useful to use the tyrants of the world to illustrate the problem here. What about in the face of a Mao, or a Hitler, or a Stalin, or (more prosaically) a Donald Trump? How does

this book apply to these circumstances and/or these organizations? These are extreme edge cases, but they are clear enough that they illustrate the problem. Perhaps the answer is to quit—get out—and go to another organization where the values are different. But of course simply running from evil is widely acknowledged also to be an ethical landmine. In fact, the Arbinger books don't talk about these cases at all.

There is an unstated assumption that they are only covering the "everyday" case, not the case of actual evil in the world. But in fact, people have to contend with evil—circumstances, people, whatever—much more than we all let on in our society today, and that is where people need the most help from, say, books about leadership. Most people implicitly understand from birth that positive feelings lead to positive interactions and that defensiveness contains the seeds of conflict. That's the easy part. The hard part is what to do when the problems are bigger than simple defensiveness, passive-aggressiveness, etc.

The Arbinger books, both "Leadership and Self-Deception" and "The Anatomy of Peace" are largely silent on such problems, despite their titles. At worst, they could be read to suggest that the best approach is appeasement, with the assumption that over a long enough period of time, appeasement ultimately leads the tyrant or the despot to realize the error of his or her ways, in a troubled echo of pop psychology (all they need is love!).

I don't want to say that these books are just "platitudes" or anything of that sort—for those that haven't ever been exposed to ideas like these, they can be a powerful impulse for improving one's life and relationships.

But it's absolutely true that these books deal only with the happiest of life's "difficult" situations—those in which the only problems really are just "problems in getting along with each other," rather than problems of mental illness, evil, narcissism, legitimately antisocial behavior, and so on—problems that, in fact, are rampant in our society, in our companies, and in our families.

If this book in particular had confronted that question—the question of where to draw the line, and how to think about and consider such decisions—I'd have given more stars. But by glossing over this question and pretending as though it doesn't have to be answered, and possibly doing some harm by suggesting that the solution to every problem is genuine positive regard and a turned cheek—it limits itself to a two-star rating.

107 of 114 people found the following review helpful.

Game-Changer

By D. Kanigan

Leadership and Self Deception was originally published in 2000 and has become an international bestseller with over 750,000 copies sold & translated into 22 languages. The book tells a story about a senior business executive who is struggling at the office and at home. (He doesn't know he's struggling professionally to optimize results - but he quickly learns this is the case.)

* This is a simple story, with a logical message. Yet, the story nicely explains that we all often fail to see that we have a problem. We do engage in self-deception. We do "unwittingly sabotage relationships at work and at home." And our actions do provoke a response that encourages the opposite of our intention.

* Part I explains "Self-Deception and the Box." Part II explains "How We Get In the Box." Part III explains "How We Get Out of the Box." Being "In the box" is seeing others as objects. "Out of the Box" is seeing yourself and others as people. (They make this come alive in the book.)

* As I was reading the book, particularly Part I and Part II, I was impressed at how they framed the narrative and discussion to make me realize how I've been deceiving myself. Several "AHA" moments here. Rather

than give too much of the story line away - they use a simple example of a Business Executive sleeping and then hearing his infant crying - he knows that he should get up to help his spouse - he doesn't - he then justifies not getting up by mentally elevating his importance (he needs to get up early in the morning; he's the main bread winner; he's a good dad; he's the victim) while he mentally frames up his spouse who isn't getting up as being lazy, unappreciative, inconsiderate, etc. He elevates his own importance over his wife; he rationalizes why he is justified in not getting up to help the baby; he gets angry and this ultimately leads to a response which is opposite to what he was looking for. Even though no words are spoken.

* The "answer" will not be found in a new leadership strategy. It will not be found in developing a new communication skill or changing your behavior. It will not be found in trying to change someone to your way of thinking. The answer is changing "your way of being."

* I'm not a fan of parables because I have often found this format either too contrived or generally not relevant to me. Yet, I believe this story, the message and the anecdotes are universally applicable and true and will resonate with many readers.

* The < 200 page book is a quick and easy read. It should take you less than 3 hours.

* While the book is framed in a business context, it will benefit all readers: leaders, non-leaders, professionals and individuals in for-profits and non-for-profits.

* Any cons? I have two "nits." (1) You reach the end of the book to learn that Part II (Accountability Transformation System) and Part III (Monitoring System) are not discussed or included in the book and you would need to enroll in Arbinge's seminars to learn this. This was a bit deceptive and unnecessary in my opinion as the core message in the book remains powerful. They should have stripped these references from the story and included it in the appendix. (2) Later editions of the book were revised to include a section on "How to Use Leadership and Self-Deception" including hiring, team building, conflict resolution, accountability and personal growth and development. This section added very little utility - but again, it does not detract from the value of the book.

* So many self-help books leave no lasting value or impression - you get a quick high (if you are lucky) and the message evaporates. Not this one. This one will stick. Highly recommended.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

This book is more than you will ever think...

By Tom Hackim

Leadership & Self Deception is not about someone else's issues and problems that seemingly piss ME/YOU off. The premise is all about ME/YOU deciding that its time to engage people for who they are so I/YOU can "work to make things go right." The issue is not to change someone else's behavior (read that line twice)... but changing MY attitude and behavior regardless of whatever their attitude might be. Wow! But what about them and their attitude?

Too bad - so sad - because Self-Deception is the inability to see that I have a problem. This is why... "No matter what we are doing on the outside, people respond primarily to how we are feeling about them on the inside." That is very enlightening.

The point is that OUR success as a leader at work in the home etc. depends on being free of self betrayal. Only then by our actions and emotions do we invite others to be free of self betrayal.

I highly recommend this book. At a bare minimum - it will probably help lower your blood pressure. What's not to love??

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Amazon.com Review

Using the story/parable format so popular these days, Leadership and Self-Deception takes a novel psychological approach to leadership. It's not what you do that matters, say the authors (presumably plural--the book is credited to the esteemed Arbinger Institute), but why you do it. Latching onto the latest leadership trend won't make people follow you if your motives are selfish--people can smell a rat, even one that says it's trying to empower them. The tricky thing is, we don't know that our motivation is flawed. We deceive ourselves in subtle ways into thinking that we're doing the right thing for the right reason. We really do know what the right thing to do is, but this constant self-justification becomes such an ingrained habit that it's hard to break free of it--it's as though we're trapped in a box, the authors say.

Learning how the process of self-deception works--and how to avoid it and stay in touch with our innate sense of what's right--is at the heart of the book. We follow Tom, an old-school, by-the-book kind of guy who is a newly hired executive at Zagrum Corporation, as two senior executives show him the many ways he's "in the box," how that limits him as a leader in ways he's not aware of, and of course how to get out. This is as much a book about personal transformation as it is about leadership per se. The authors use examples from the characters' private as well as professional lives to show how self-deception skews our view of ourselves and the world and ruins our interactions with people, despite what we sincerely believe are our best intentions.

While the writing won't make John Updike lose any sleep, the story entertainingly does the job of pulling the reader in and making a potentially abstruse argument quite enjoyable. The authors have a much better ear for dialogue than is typical of the genre (the book is largely dialogue), although a certain didactic tone creeps in now and then. But ultimately it's a hopeful, even inspiring read that flows along nicely and conveys a message that more than a few managers need to hear. --Pat McGill

Review

"... not just another book on leadership. It identifies the central issue of all performance. I recommend it very highly." -- Brad Pelo, President and CEO, NextPage

"... shows why the truth about failure is so difficult to see, and explains how to overcome such self-deception." -- Dave Checketts, President and CEO, Madison Square Garden Corp.

"Arbinger taught our leadership team at LensCrafters and the difference...was remarkable. This is the...key to productivity and creativity." -- Dave Browne, former President and CEO, LensCrafters

"Don't be fooled by the title--this book is for everyone. I can't think about my life the same way again." -- Jack Anderson, Syndicated Columnist and Pulitzer Prize Winner

"Fascinating, thought provoking, and insightful! Once I started reading, I couldn't put it down." -- Steven C. Wheelwright, Professor and Senior Associate Dean, Harvard Business School

"From boosting the bottom line to increasing personal joy, this book shows the way." -- Bruce L. Christensen, former President and CEO, PBS

"I love this book. Like truth itself, it reveals more with each re-examination. I recommend it highly." -- Doug Hawth, Sales Vice President, Lucent Technologies

"I've known the work of the Arbinger Institute for years. Arbinger's ideas are profound, with deep and sweeping implications for organizations. Leadership and Self-Deception provides the perfect introduction to this material. It is engaging and fresh, easy to read, and packed with insight. I couldn't recommend it more highly." -- Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

"This is significant, original stuff. This book is a terrific introduction to Arbinger's groundbreaking material. I enjoyed it immensely." -- Robert C. Gay, Managing Director, Bain Capital

From the Author

"Arbinger" is the ancient French spelling of the word "harbinger." It means "one that indicates or foreshadows what is to come; a forerunner." The Arbinger Institute is a forerunner, a "harbinger," of change.

Arbinger's change work grows out of the development at the heart of the human sciences that is introduced in this book. Led by philosopher Terry Warner, a team of scholars has broken new ground in solving the age-old problem of self-deception. The result is a striking account of human behavior and human potential. The Arbinger Institute was founded to translate this important work into practical effect for individuals, families, and organizations worldwide.

Arbinger's focus on organizations began when a well-known consultant asked for our help with one of his clients. As a result of Arbinger's work, that company became the industry's profit leader, eventually doubling and even tripling the return on investment of its nearest competitors. Out of that experience Arbinger began to focus on the organizational implications and applications of the self-deception problem and solution--a focus that continues today.

Founded by Terry Warner, Arbinger is led by managing directors Duane Boyce, Jim Ferrell, and Paul Smith. For more information about Arbinger's background, products, and services, please visit our website.

Well, e-book *Leadership And Self-Deception: Getting Out Of The Box By Arbinger Institute* will make you closer to exactly what you are ready. This *Leadership And Self-Deception: Getting Out Of The Box By Arbinger Institute* will be constantly buddy any sort of time. You may not forcedly to constantly complete over reviewing an e-book basically time. It will be just when you have leisure and also spending few time to make you feel satisfaction with what you check out. So, you could obtain the meaning of the message from each sentence in guide.