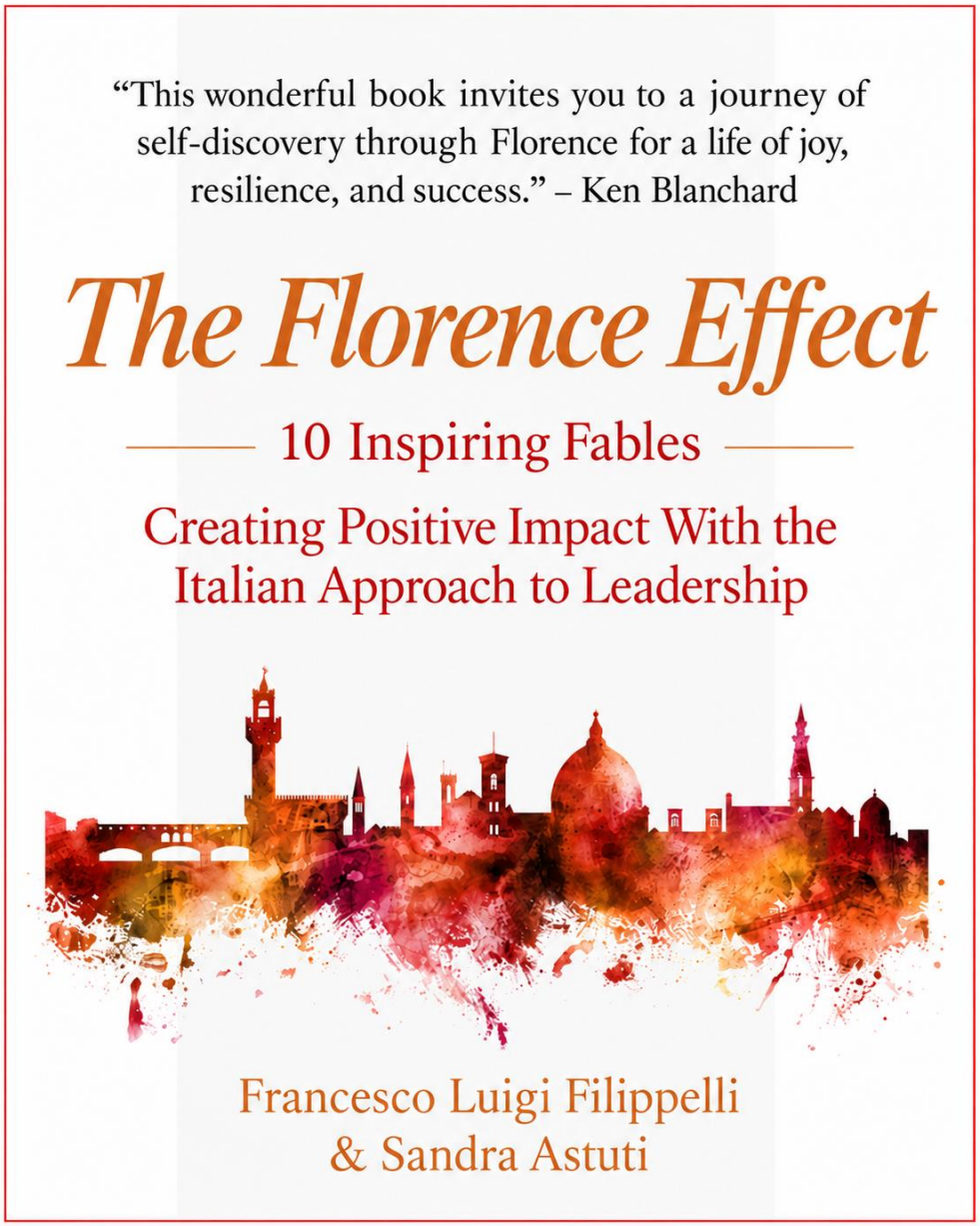
The Florence Effect

Creating Positive Impact With the Italian Approach to Leadership

Francesco Luigi Filippelli & Sandra Astuti



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"In their wonderful book Francesco Filippelli and Sandra Astuti invite readers to embark on a pleasurable journey of self-discovery among famous Florentine landmarks. Walk with Leonardo and Dante through the streets of Florence, reflect on inspiring fables about personal and professional growth, and choose to live a life of joy, resilience, and success." – **Ken Blanchard**, coauthor of *The New One Minute Manager* and *Simple Truths of Leadership*

Why *The Florence Effect* Matters Now

In the storm of artificial intelligence, many jobs will be wiped out, others will be transformed, and new roles will emerge. Human beings face a fundamental question:

What do we bring to the marketplace that is uniquely human?

Technology can process information faster than we can, but it cannot replace the deepest qualities of human leadership: intuition, empathy, trust, courage, imagination, responsibility, generosity, the ability to inspire others, and the capacity to give meaning to what we do.

This is where The Florence Effect begins.

The book is built on a simple but increasingly urgent idea: before leading others, we must first learn to lead ourselves with a new approach in the era of AI.

For young professionals, this means discovering what gives them energy and joy, recognizing their talents, understanding what contribution they want to make, and creating a realistic plan to build a life and career with intention rather than by accident.

For experienced leaders, the challenge is different. It is no longer simply about delivering results. It is about facing the new challenges of AI with creativity and creating the conditions in which other people can grow, take responsibility, discover their strengths, and eventually become leaders themselves.

Florence is one of the protagonists of the book.

The journey unfolds through its streets from morning to sunset, but the city is far more than scenery. Florence carries within it a centuries-old message about human potential.

As one of the greatest cradles of the Renaissance, Florence became a place where artists, thinkers, scholars, craftsmen, merchants, architects, and innovators could meet and exchange ideas. Under the Medici family, who governed the city, extraordinary talents were brought into proximity, supported, challenged, and connected. The result was not simply individual brilliance, but an ecosystem in which brilliance could flourish.

For us, this is a powerful metaphor for modern leadership.

Leadership is not about proving your own genius. It is about creating the environment in which the genius of others can emerge.

That is *The Florence Effect*.

The book therefore offers more than leadership lessons. It proposes a distinctly Italian approach to leadership: ambitious but human, structured but creative, demanding but generous.

This is not another leadership manual. Our ambition was different: to distill years of leadership practice, coaching, organizational experience, reading, and reflection into ten memorable stories.

Stories are micro-capsules of coaching. They do not impose a lesson. They allow readers to enter a situation, recognize themselves in a character, experience a dilemma, and arrive at their own insights and put them into action.

During workshops with university students in Italy, participants described these stories as “secular parables.” We believe this captures their power. They can be read for pleasure, but they can also become mirrors that gently challenge readers to reconsider their choices and the lives they are building.

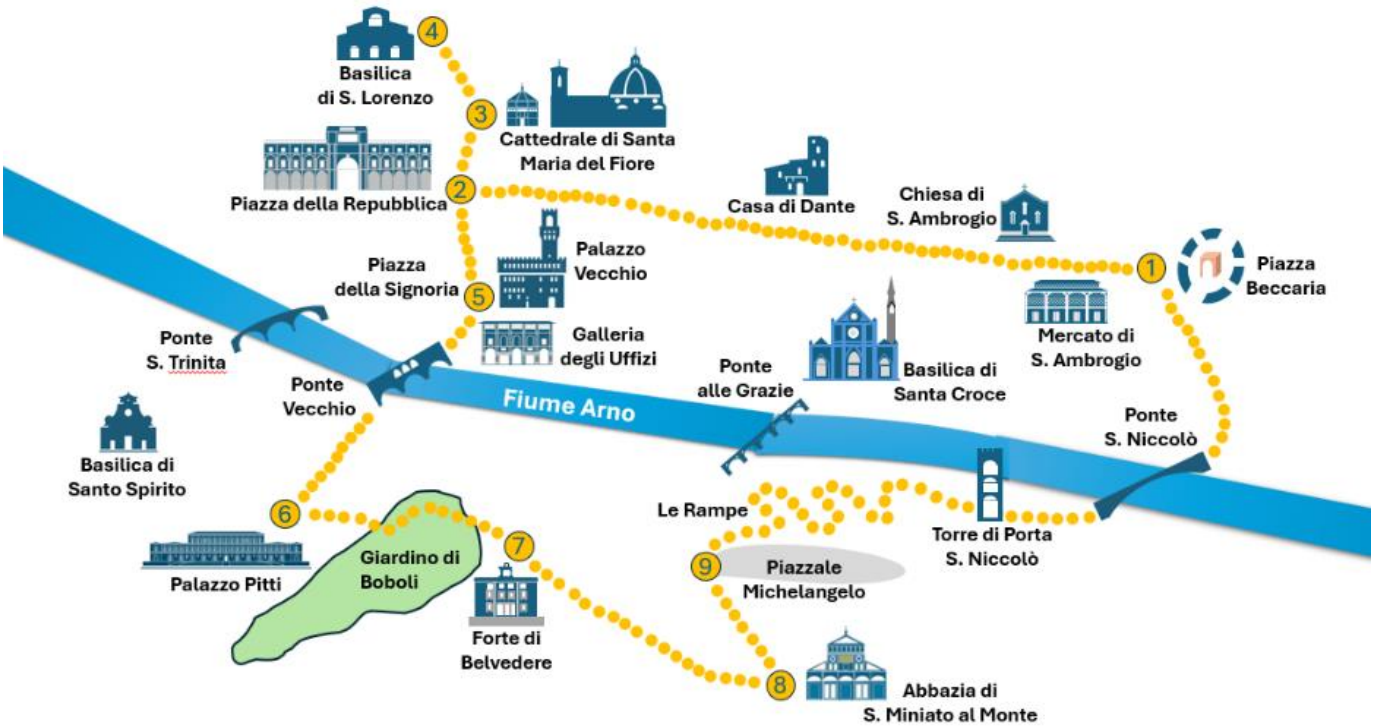
People spend a significant part of their lives at work, and leadership can influence not only performance but also confidence, motivation, belonging, emotional stability, and quality of life.

Organizations therefore have a responsibility that goes beyond creating wealth for shareholders. They also have the opportunity to create environments in which people can flourish.

Our international careers have reinforced this conviction. Working across countries, cultures, companies, and generations has shown us that management practices may differ, but the fundamental human questions remain remarkably similar.

Who am I? What am I good at? What gives meaning to my work? These questions belong to no single country or culture.

A book not simply about how to lead, but about who we choose to become as we lead and find joy in life.



Who This Book Is For

The book's reach extends far beyond its Florentine setting. It can find a home in universities and companies, in leadership programs and executive education, in workshops, and on the shelves of readers around the world. And it will speak to anyone who loves Florence, its history, and the Italian way of looking at life.

Target readership:

University students preparing to enter the world of work. They should ask themselves what they want to do, what they are good at, and what kind of life they want to build. The stories have already been shared in workshops with university students in Italy, where participants recognized themselves in the characters and their dilemmas.

Young professionals in the first years of their careers. They want to build a life and career with intention rather than by accident: discovering what gives them energy and joy, recognizing their talents, and creating a realistic plan for the contribution they want to make.

Managers in the middle of their lives and careers. They have reached positions of responsibility, often thanks to their technical expertise. But as artificial intelligence takes over more technical and analytical work, they must rethink their role and reinvent themselves around the skills that remain uniquely human. They now face new questions. How do I lead people, not only deliver results? How do I help others grow and become leaders themselves? How do I keep finding meaning and joy in my work after many years?

Educators, trainers, and coaches. The book is a natural tool for those who develop others: educators, trainers, coaches, and HR and learning professionals who can use the ten fables and questions in classrooms, leadership programs, and workshops.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Francesco Luigi Filippelli is an Italian author, engineer, and international business executive. Alongside a career in senior leadership roles within multinational companies, he has devoted many years to studying personal growth, leadership, and the cultural heritage of Florence. He is the Vice President Railway for EMEA, a European division of Lippert, a global US-based company in manufacturing products and parts for Rail Industry recreation vehicles like RV's, caravans, boats, and towing. Lippert employs over 14,00 employees in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and a net sales of close to 4 billion dollars. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the School of Industrial Engineering at the University of Florence.



Sandra Astuti is an Italian author, legal consultant, executive and business coach specializing in professional development and team building. Her work focuses on strengthening leadership and communication skills and improving organizational processes through practical, actionable tools. She works alongside senior management teams during periods of change, corporate reorganization, and cultural development, combining strategic consulting, mentoring, training, and coaching in an integrated approach.

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A PERSONAL INVITATION

There comes a moment in every life when you ask yourself: Is this the life I chose? Is this the life I want to live?

Florence knows those questions.

For centuries, this city has drawn people searching for something deeper than beauty. They arrive looking for inspiration. They leave having discovered something about themselves.

What makes Florence extraordinary is not that it offers answers. It teaches you how to ask better questions. And better questions lead to better choices.

This book is an invitation to that same journey.

Not to visit Florence as a tourist, but to experience what we call The Florence Effect: the quiet transformation that happens when beauty, history, wisdom, and personal reflection come together.

Through ten inspiring fables and ten conversations, you will walk beside a traveler in search of meaning. Along the way, Florence itself becomes the mentor, revealing timeless lessons on courage, purpose, resilience, trust, responsibility, and leadership.

We wrote these stories for anyone standing at a crossroads. For those who feel something is missing. For those who know change is necessary, but do not yet know where to begin.

Walk these streets with an open mind.

Let Florence ask you the questions that could change your life.

Your journey begins here.

Francesco Filippelli and Sandra Astuti