Leadership Research Reports

Leadership Book Reports from the Class of 2010

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Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership

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Preface

Leadership Research

During the Advanced Leadership Training Program participants study two leadership paradigms together. After building this foundation in leadership research and theory, each participant then chooses a third perspective on leadership to study. The third book may be about a leader, a leadership model, or a leadership situation. The participant is given the task to become the expert on this approach to leadership.

Participants develop a 1-2 page summary of this view of leadership. It may be an executive summary of the book, and/or an annotated model or chart. The goal is to share with others the highlights of, and the most important lessons from, their leadership research. During the Advanced Leadership Training Program the participants teach one another about the leadership paradigms they have mastered. The summaries here are to inspire all of us to explore new perspectives on leadership.

The leadership research summaries are organized alphabetically by title of the book and are listed in the table of contents.

Table of Contents

The Ant and the Elephant: Leadership for the Self, Vince Poscente (Be Invinceable Group, 2004).
Report by Nicole Rolfe, 2010. 1

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life, Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander (Harvard Business School Press, 2000).
Report by Jan Lowery, 2010. 2

Benjamin Franklin's The Art of Virtue: His Formula for Successful Living, Benjamin Franklin, edited by George L. Rogers (Acorn Publishing, 1996)**.**
Report by Armando Herald, 2010. 3

Better Together: Restoring the American Community, Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein (Simon & Schuster, 2003).
Report by Carrie Cortiglio, 2010. 4

Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide To Creating Groups That Can Solve Problems and Change the World, Michael Jacoby Brown (Long Haul Press, 2007).
Report by Steven Huerta, 2010. 5

Called to be God's Leader: Lessons from the Life of Joshua, Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby (Thomas Nelson, 2004).
Report by Reggie McClinton, 2010. 6

Community: The Structure of Belonging, Peter Block (Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008).
Report by Cathy Busha, 2010. 7

Environmental Leadership Equals Essential Leadership: Redefining Who Leads and How, John C. Gordon and Joyce K. Berry (Yale University Press, 2006).
Report by Tina Anderson, 2010. 8

Extraordinary Groups: How Ordinary Teams Achieve Amazing Results, Geoffrey M. Bellman and Kathleen D. Ryan (Jossey-Bass, 2009).
Report by Stephanie Coronel, 2010. 9

Fierce Leadership: A Bold Alternative to the Worst "Best" Practices of Business Today, Susan Scott (Crown Business, 2009).
Report by Alice Nightengale-Luhan, 2010. 10

Find Your Strongest Life: What the Happiest and Most Successful Women do Differently, Marcus Buckingham (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009).
Report by Karen Meyer, 2010. 11

Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time, Margaret J. Wheatley (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2007).
Report by Marsha McMurray-Avila, 2010. 12

First, Break All The Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (Simon & Schuster, 1999).
Report by Karen Valentine, 2010. 14

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass Publisher, 2002).
Report by Ken Johnson, 2010. 16

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story, Ben Carson with Cecil Murphey (Zondervan, 1990).
Report by Nigel Guyot, 2010. 18

The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care, T.R. Reid (The Penguin Press, 2009).
Report by Chima Nwizu, 2010. 18

A Higher Standard of Leadership: Lessons from the Life of Gandhi, Keshavan Nair (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1994).
Report by David Cobb, 2010. 20

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas, David Bornstein (Oxford University Press, 2007).
Report by Jean MacKenzie-Wyatt, 2010. 22

How Remarkable Women Lead: The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life, Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston (Crown Publishing Group, 2009).
Report by Jaslyn Dobrahner, 2010. 22

Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization (Leadership for the Common Good), Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey (Harvard Business School Press, 2009).
Report by Lisa Cohen, 2010. 24

It's Not About The Coffee, by Howard Behar and Janet Goldstein (Penguin Group, 2009).
Report by Peter Monahan, 2010. 25

It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy, Captain D. Michael Abrashoff (Warner Books, 2002).
Report by Bryon Hopper, 2010. 26

Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of all Time, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges (Thomas Nelson Press, 2008).
Report by Christie Mettenbrink, 2010. 27

Leadership is an Art, Max De Pree (Currency, 2004).
Report by Stephanie Denning, 2010. 28

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading, Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky (Harvard Business School Press, 2002).
Report by Rainey Wikstrom, 2010. 29

Make the Right Choice: Creating a Positive, Innovative and Productive Work Life, Joel Zeff (Wiley, 2007).
Report by Scott Patefield, 2010. 31

One: The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership, Lance Secretan (The Secretan Center Inc., 2006).
Report by Linda Sobeck, 2010..... 32

Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell (Hachette Book Group, 2008).
Report by Jesse Weaver, 2010..... 33

The Power of a Positive No: Save the Deal Save The Relationship and Still Say No, William Ury (Bantam, 2007).
Report by Sabine Kortals, 2010..... 34

Profiles in Courage, John F. Kennedy (Harper & Brothers, 1955).
Report by Alix Hopkins, 2010..... 36

Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work, David Rock (Harper Collins, 2006).
Report by Joni Canterbury, 2010..... 37

Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest, Peter Block (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993).
Report by Kathy Brown, 2010..... 38

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie (Gallup Press, 2008).
Report by Lori Kennedy, 2010..... 39

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie (Gallup Press, 2008).
Report by Jennifer Kovarik, 2010..... 40

The Taboos of Leadership: 10 Secrets No One Will Tell You About Leaders and What They Really Think, Anthony F. Smith and Steven M. Bornstein (Jossey-Bass, 2007).
Report by Dee Colombini, 2010..... 40

The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, 2006).
Report by Candace Vonderwahl, 2010..... 42

Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders, Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli (Harvard Business School Press, 2007).
Report by Cassidy Smith, 2010..... 44

Toy Box Leadership: Leadership Lessons from the Toys You Loved as a Child, Ron Hunter, Jr. and Michael E. Waddell (Thomas Nelson, 2008).
Report by Julie Weissbuch, 2010..... 46

Transforming Your Leadership Culture, John B. McGuire and Gary Rhodes (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009).
Report by Fayette Augillard, 2010..... 47

Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor, Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman and James O'Toole (Jossey-Bass, 2008).
Report by Deryk Sanchez Standring, 2010..... 49

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998).
Report by Pamela Leetch, 2010. 49

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998).
Report by Curtis Taipale, 2010. 51

Unbowed: A Memoir, Wangari Maathai (Anchor, 2007).
The Greenbelt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience, Wangari Maathai (Lantern, 2006).
Report by Greta Klingler, 2010. 52

Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership

Research Reports

The Ant and the Elephant: Leadership for the Self, Vince Poscente (Be Invinceable Group, 2004).

Report by Nicole Rolfe, 2010.

Our minds function in two distinct spaces, the conscious and subconscious. The conscious part of the brain is the intentional part of the brain and houses critical and analytical thoughts; whereas, the subconscious part of the brain houses the instinctual and impulsive side of a person, as well as the emotions and memories.

The Ant and the Elephant is a parable about an ant, Adere, and an elephant, Elgo. The ant represents our conscious mind and the elephant the subconscious mind. The goal is to align the ant and the elephant through the leadership steps Poscente identifies in the book. Poscente believes the ant and the elephant both must have the same goal and share the same feelings about achieving the goal. Once the ant and the elephant are aligned, one can accomplish anything!

Poscente also discusses his reasons for writing the book. One particular finding struck me: scientific research has shown that at birth we are born with over 120 billion active neurons in the brain. Over time unused neurons go dormant. As adults, we end up with about 10 billion neurons to use for both conscious and subconscious brain activity. In one second, the conscious mind uses 2,000 neurons and, in that same second, the subconscious mind uses 4 billion neurons, which begs the question, what part of our brain is in control? The answer is the subconscious mind, which is using four billion neurons in one second. Poscente believes that this affirms why it is of the utmost importance to align one's ant and elephant.

The major leadership steps identified in the book are as follows:

Clarify your vision.

- Make fear your friend not your master.
- You don't know what you don't know. Open your mind to possibilities—they may not be obvious at the time.
- Zero in on a goal. The goal has to have depth and meaning; the journey has to be worth taking.
  - *Action Steps:* Find the elephant "buzz," or the emotion which ignites the vision. An example of this is when you get the tingles, and you know that you are in the right place or doing the right thing. The goal is to get this buzz more often.
  - Inspire your team through emotion. Never underestimate the power of emotion. As a leader, take into consideration what motivates the team and yourself.

Commit to cultivating positive, dominant thoughts.

- Shift beliefs, attitudes, and truths so they are aligned with the vision.
- Envision having the goal, not just wanting the goal.
  - *Action Steps:* Learn to delay gratification; speak in present tense about having the goal; stay the course—change is gradual.
    - Poscente includes an example of staying the course: Imagine that you have a 500,000 gallon bucket full of water and the goal is to turn the water in the bucket deep blue by adding only one drop of coloring to the bucket each

day. If you miss a day, you cannot make up for it by adding two the next day. Initially you may miss some days, but if the goal is worth taking, you will eventually get into the practice of adding your drop each day. Over time, you will see the color of the water changing to blue.

Consistently focus on performance—experience the goal as if it were happening right now.

- Show your gratitude constantly. Practice experiencing and expressing gratitude regularly. This will help to put issues or problems in perspective.
  - *Action Step:* Use a reminder/trigger to stay focused on the goal. These reminders, or triggers, should have emotions tied to them. The emotions must align with the goal of the team.
    - In the book, every time Adere saw a gold dot of pollen, he would remind himself of his goal. Eventually every time he saw a gold dot he would get an elephant "buzz" because he knew he was on the right track. This eventually turned into a cycle helping him to achieve the ultimate goal.

Strengthen confidence.

- Frustration leads to negative thoughts, which fuel negativity.
- No two thoughts can occupy the same space in the mind at the same time. Replace negativity with positive, confident thoughts.
- If fear is keeping you from taking the steps to reach your goal, ask yourself, would you rather reach your goal or stay afraid? Life lessons are generally learned during uncomfortable times.
  - *Action Step:* Institute pattern busters. Once you recognize a pattern of negativity, interrupt it by saying thank you but that's not part of my vision; always remind yourself of your vision.

Control the response to any situation.

- Expect the unexpected.
- Anticipate your (and the team's) response to challenges.
  - *Action Step:* Create flash cards that detail stressful scenarios. Practice how you would handle each of these stressful scenarios and play them out. Mentally picture yourself handling each case with ease.

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life, Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander (Harvard Business School Press, 2000).
Report by Jan Lowery, 2010.

In *The Art of Possibility*, the Zanders posit that what we see with our eyes is a perception arrived at through a selection process based on social norms, past experiences, and personal bias. They believe that when in this state, it is impossible to see the realm of possibility beyond what we "see," and they suggest that to create change one must learn to look at the world, one's relationships, and one's self in a new way. The overriding theme of the book is that in order to realize the world of possibility, we must change the paradigms in which we live. To support their ideas, the Zanders present twelve practices one could employ to reorient one's self to the world of possibility:

- **It's All Invented:** Identify what assumptions you are making; work to identify those of which you are unaware as well as those you are aware of. Ask if there are other options.
- **Step into the Universe of Possibility:** Ask yourself how your thoughts and actions are a result of the measured world (i.e., competition, scarcity thinking, survival of the fittest, etc.).
- **Giving an A:** Break down barriers that establish hierarchies; hierarchies keep people apart and do not breed personal growth. Start with a high bar.
- **Be a Contribution:** Shift away from self-concern; stop whining; adapt. Engage in relationships where you are making a contribution. "There is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing."
- **Lead From Any Chair:** Delegate. Allow others to be great. Be the "silent conductor." A good leader does not need a podium.
- **Rule # 6:** Don't take yourself too seriously. Lighten up, others will follow. Warm yourself to others. Be vulnerable.
- **The Way Things Are:** Have presence without resistance. Accept. Create possibility with what you have; find the silver lining; see the glass as half-full.
- **Giving Way to Passion:** Live out loud. Let go. Participate wholly.
- **Lighting Spark:** Enroll others with your enthusiasm. Give others your spark and accept theirs.
- **Being the Board:** Be accountable for your life and your choices; own them. Think: I am the framework for everything that happens in my life. Do not be a victim. Give yourself the power to transform your own life.
- **Frameworks for Possibility:** Become your vision. Be the conduit to carry this vision forward.
- **Tell the Story:** Be inclusive. Share with others the story of possibility.

Benjamin Franklin's The Art of Virtue: His Formula for Successful Living, Benjamin Franklin, edited by George L. Rogers (Acorn Publishing, 1996)**.**
Report by Armando Herald, 2010.

One of the highlights of this book is Franklin's revelation that "on the whole, though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it." That Franklin never obtained the moral perfection he thought possible and, furthermore, never finished this book, which was intended to serve as a guide for successful living and obtaining moral perfection, yet felt accomplished in the endeavor, I find very inspiring. I learned that at every opportunity resolve to pursue the most difficult goals because the failure to achieve them can, with the application of reflection, be reframed to demonstrate multiple accomplishments along the way.

To my continued delight, in *Benjamin Franklin's The Art of Virtue*, Franklin adds many pearls of wisdom for living. For example, in a story to a friend concerning his youth, Franklin observes that "a great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their giving too much for their whistles." In this same story, Franklin first narrates his experience of giving all the coppers in his

possession for a whistle he became enamored with. Franklin then relates, “My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth.” This put Franklin “in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of my money, […] and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.” Paying too much for one’s “whistle” is giving all of something one has (i.e., money, time, energy, family, health, etc.) for something (i.e., possessions, status, results) one doesn’t need or that has been overvalued.

Finally, Franklin says, and I wholeheartedly agree, “The desire of happiness in general is so natural to us that all the world is in pursuit of it.” Furthermore, “There is no happiness then but in a virtuous and self-approving conduct.” In so far as successful living includes happiness, Franklin has given me a great formula and a specific tool relating to the achievement of those virtues I have determined lead to my self-approving conduct. For Franklin, as Poor Richard comments, “’Tis easy to frame a good bold resolution; but hard is the Task that concerns execution.’” The tool to which I refer is an ingenious approach using an incremental method of mastering specific identified virtues one at time over a specific period of time. The basic idea is to concentrate on one virtue until one is in the position of never having to record on any day of the past week a fault in regards to the target virtue. During this time, also record the times you indentify faults with the remaining virtues. In this way, you will be “like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strengths, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second.”

Better Together: Restoring the American Community, Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein (Simon & Schuster, 2003).
Report by Carrie Cortiglio, 2010.

In Putnam’s previous work, *Bowling Alone*, he documented a decline in civic participation and engagement over the past few decades. In *Better Together*, Putnam explores the issue of building social capital. By looking at a wide array of examples, from Saddleback Church in California to the United Parcel Service (UPS) to a neighborhood development group in Boston, Putnam seeks to understand how to create new forms of community and “reweave” the fabric of social capital. Here is a summary of the major lessons in the book:

Communication is crucial and face-to-face encounters matter: “Creating robust social capital takes time and effort. For the most part, it develops through extensive and time-consuming face-to-face conversation between two individuals or among small groups of people.” Putnam cites several great examples of programs or organizations that emphasize the importance of regular communication among members. For example, UPS relies on face-to-face meetings instead of conference calls or e-mail to ensure that connections among managers and workers and between co-workers remain strong. The leadership lesson here is that although fostering these interactions doesn’t seem to achieve the larger goal of an organization and is inefficient, it creates critical team cohesion.

Winning creates imagination: A profile of a community organizing group in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, demonstrates the importance of small successes early on in creating momentum for an organization. “Winning creates imagination,” says Sister Judy Donovan, leading organizer of Valley Interfaith.

Solutions need to arise from the community or group members themselves: In several of the examples, organizers created buy-in from the community by letting them drive the decision making process. For example, in the case of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, original plans for the structure of the organization were completely scrapped to accommodate changes demanded by members of the community. At UPS, key committees are staffed and run by hourly workers; a manager will co-chair in order to facilitate or help implement ideas, but solutions to problems like safety issues arise from the workers themselves. Organizations where leadership arises from members also set themselves up to be self-sustaining. Training future leaders ensures that the work of the group can last beyond one charismatic individual.

Buy-in at all levels is important: The book profiled a pilot program called "Experience Corps" that brought retirees into schools to tutor kids in reading and math. The director notes: "The enthusiastic support and participation of the principal and teachers are basic requirements. If support is lacking or halfhearted, the relationships will probably fail. If the principal is enthusiastic but the teachers are not, the program cannot work."

The take home point for me is that relationship and community building was the key to the success of all the examples covered in the book. The hard work of building trust and nurturing relationships was central to achieving the larger goals communities and organizations set out to accomplish.

Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide To Creating Groups That Can Solve Problems and Change the World, Michael Jacoby Brown (Long Haul Press, 2007). Report by Steven Huerta, 2010.

Building Powerful Community Organizations is a plain-spoken, paint-by-numbers blueprint for creating a community organization, understanding one's resources, and campaigning for change. Brown has used his decades of experience in organizing groups as well as the experiences of many others to establish methods, techniques, and "do-nots" to help organizations build themselves or to discover what issues are preventing them from achieving their stated goal. While the book is focused on community organizing, the information presented can be applied toward affecting the success of any group, private or public.

The first section of this book discusses how to form an organization, from understanding what a community organization is to deciding the structural framework of one's organization. Brown emphasizes throughout the book the importance of looking at one's own story in order to be a more effective leader, and he cautions that the most effective leaders aren't merely just helping; rather, they have a personal stake in the issue being addressed. Brown also advises that effective leaders talk to those they are bringing on board about their story—this helps to better understand their commitment, or possible lack of it. A key point raised by Brown is to ask if the population that will be the most affected by the organization really cares. If not, it may be a non-starter. Brown continues the discussion of organization building to include the topics of crafting a mission statement, framing objectives, structuring membership, and establishing values and norms. Along the way, Brown includes checklists and exercises that can be used by the organizer, as well as the organization itself.

The second portion of this book concentrates more on understanding one's resources, both capital and personnel. Brown begins with focusing on recruitment. Understanding who and why you want to recruit will greatly impact the power base of your organization. He then advises

on how to recruit, and when to know to stop. His use of personal and contributed anecdotal stories helps to paint a vivid picture of these actions in practice. Brown believes it is important to understand that one organizer cannot do it all and that recruiting and training leaders within the organization is important. Understanding the importance of task delegation and how to delegate can lead to a greater level of involvement from members and take some of the burden off the organizer. He concludes this section with a discussion about raising capital, through members and grants. Here too, the exercises and checklists are amazingly helpful.

The third section is really the heart of the book—you have built your organization, or you are leading it, and your organization is on mission and on path to accomplish the objectives it has set out to do. There is quite a bit of this section that is a reminder from previous sections, such as understanding why you chose to organize, and why those with you are part of the effort. Brown then explains the types of action that can be taken to get results. This section is concluded with a discussion of how action and intent can lead to building a stronger sense of community.

The last section of the book is about placing you and your organization in a much larger context. Brown uses this section to place the importance of community organizing in the national and worldwide stages. He emphasizes the importance of community organizations and the influence they can sometimes wield. Overall, he believes in the value and importance of community involvement, stating that "real democracy means more than voting once every year or two and then hoping that the people we elect do the job."

This book is essential for any community organizer, beginning or experienced. Brown does an incredibly thorough job of uncovering assumptions and illuminating commonly missed steps. Though the focus is on community organizing, the skills presented here will do justice to any assembled group of individuals that need to become an organized group. It is truly a glove-box item for any leader.

Called to be God's Leader: Lessons from the Life of Joshua, Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby (Thomas Nelson, 2004).
Report by Reggie McClinton, 2010.

In *Called to be God's Leader*, the authors chronicle Joshua's rise from slavery to becoming the leader of a nation. Using leadership principles drawn from the life of Joshua, the authors demonstrate how great accomplishments and effective leadership are not beyond the grasp of those who place themselves in God's hands and, as Joshua did, simply remain steadfast in the small things. Joshua's life demonstrated tremendous leadership skills; in fact, he practiced many of the leadership skills that are highly praised in military and corporate circles today. The book focuses on what the authors describe as Joshua's Leadership Principles:

Grow during transitions: The book describes how Joshua was a man of integrity; there was always a perfect match between his words and actions. Joshua's integrity preceded and then led to his appointment as leader of Israel. Before he was the leader of Israel, he was a servant of one of Israel's greatest leaders, Moses. Joshua was content in his role as an associate, but he was also content to take on the role of primary leader. Joshua used his time as an understudy to grow and prepare for ascension to leadership. He remained focused on his relationship with God, and he made the most of growth opportunities.

Build on the past: The authors posit that one of the greatest obstacles in effectively succeeding an esteemed leader is overcoming the hurdle of pride. "It is one thing to serve under a great leader; it is another thing to succeed a great leader." Rejecting an organization's history can

reflect a callous disregard for what was already accomplished. Arguably, Joshua succeeded in being the greatest leader in their nation's history. He was not insecure, and he did not try to destroy the foundations of his predecessor; he embraced them.

Be a teacher: Lead by example. Joshua modeled good leadership principles as he led the Israelites. Throughout his life, Joshua exemplified great leadership qualities. Whether being assigned dangerous spy missions or holding to his principles against the majority of his countrymen, Joshua led by example. Even after he became the leader of the nation and its military forces, he continued to model these principles. Joshua, like some of history's most famous military leaders, refused to order his people to do something that he was unwilling to do.

Use leadership tools: Stories and symbols have an enormous value as leadership tools. Good leaders learn how to incorporate these tools into their leadership style. Joshua told stories, and used physical symbols and symbolic actions to great effect. For example, after a great victory, Joshua would build monuments to remind the people of this wonderful accomplishment.

Remain focused: From the moment he took the reins of leadership, there were no questions about his intentions to invade and conquer territory. Joshua clearly understood his assignment and prepared the nation for that goal. He continuously moved the nation forward in this effort. He was so passionate about this mandate that even towards the end of his life he instructed the nation to continue on with the invasion.

Be a decisive leader: Joshua was a decisive leader; the ability and willingness to take decisive and timely action can mean the difference between victory and defeat. Prompt decisions must also be careful decisions, especially during military battles. Joshua was wise and sought guidance through prayer and his relationship with God.

Submit to God: Joshua received a mandate to be strong and courageous and to follow God wholeheartedly. He was also commanded to continuously study the Laws of God in order to be prosperous and have success. Through his obedience and submission, Joshua never lost a battle.

Community: The Structure of Belonging, Peter Block (Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008). Report by Cathy Busha, 2010.

> This book is for all who are willing to take a leadership role that affirms the conviction that without a willingness to be accountable for our part in creating a strong and connected community, our desire to reduce suffering and increase happiness in the world becomes infinitely more difficult to fulfill. (Peter Block)

Paolo Freire believed that every step of liberation must have liberation embedded in it. In *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block instructs leaders who seek to build healthy, sustainable, connected communities that every step of the community-building process must have community imbedded and centered within it as well: "Community is fundamentally an interdependent human system given form by the conversation it holds with itself."

Block provides many examples of failed community initiatives that seek input from stakeholders and then are turned over to external paid professionals to implement. Over and over, we are stunned when community initiatives, led by paid professionals who live outside of the community, fail.

Instead, Block calls for leaders to use authentic invitation and hospitality to create welcoming spaces and engaging structures so communities can meet their own needs. He talks

about the importance of the meeting room (design, temperature, etc.) and the meeting facilitation (i.e., encouraging dissent, asking clarifying questions rather than providing answers, and expertise). Block also discusses the importance of creating small working groups, so that each individual gets to talk, be heard, and develop a sense of ownership over the process and goal: "The small group is the unit of transformation."

As Block writes, "In communal transformation, leadership is about intention, convening, valuing relatedness and presenting choices. It is not a personality characteristic or a matter of style...." Leaders create dialogue that includes invitation, possibility, ownership, dissent, commitment, and gifts of the participants. The leadership task is to bring the gifts of those on the margin into the center. Block believes that leaders must shift the conversation from problems to possibility. He writes extensively about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) as a constructive model.

Block also writes about what he calls "romanticizing leadership." He does not believe that leaders are a special group of people; rather, he believes true leadership is about inspiring, welcoming, and building the capacity and passion of the community, and then getting out of the way. Block believes that the traditional view of leadership "lets people off the hook and breeds dependency and entitlement. It undermines a culture where each is accountable for their community."

To summarize the book, leadership is essentially these three tasks:

- Create a context that nurtures an alternative future, one based on welcoming, gifts, generosity, accountability, and commitment.
- Initiate and convene conversations that shift people's experience, which occurs through the way people are brought together and the nature of the questions to engage them.
- Listen and pay attention.

Environmental Leadership Equals Essential Leadership: Redefining Who Leads and How, John C. Gordon and Joyce K. Berry (Yale University Press, 2006).
Report by Tina Anderson, 2010.

Environmental Leadership Equals Essential Leadership is Gordon and Berry's first attempt to make the case that environmental problems are particularly hard to solve. Environmental problems are defined by the length of time to a solution, the complexity, the weak and scattered science base, the many different disciplines involved, the emotionally charged atmosphere, and the uncertainty and unintended consequences. Since I have been working on environmental problems for most of my career, I agree that they are difficult, but I'm not convinced that environmental problems are any more or less difficult to solve than many other big problems, such as poverty, lack of health care, illiteracy, terrorism, etc.

Gordon and Berry also make the point that total human satisfaction is not a common attribute of environmental problem solutions. They suggest that most solutions involve compromise among deeply held values and objectives, and that participants in the process should feel the solutions are an improvement.

In terms of techniques, Gordon and Berry suggest to find agreement first, fight later. They also say help the rational middle find its voice and power so that opposing points of view

don't control the decision making process. The best way to do this is to have broad-based public involvement.

After reviewing many books by leaders in corporate America, Gordon and Berry stress that leaders should not look at the basic environmental argument as the Environment vs. Corporate America. While industry may be the source of many environmental problems, industry is also the largest "engine" of environmental improvement, so it is important to look at leadership from the perspective of corporations.

Time frames for science, management, and policy are not equal. Gordon and Berry point out that decision makers want results faster than the scientific process can crank them out. All persons involved need to understand the time frames of the specific processes.

In addition to talking about environmental leadership issues, the authors discuss basic or "essential" leadership attributes: the ability to see ahead and communicate what you see; the ability to find, understand, and transmit needed information; the importance of inclusion; the importance of defining and pursuing an action agenda—doing things now rather than later; formulating the definition of success; and using empathy and humor in dealing with others.

This book seemed to embrace many of the leadership ideas discussed in Kouzes and Posner's *Leadership Challenge*, although Kouzes and Posner were not referenced.

Extraordinary Groups: How Ordinary Teams Achieve Amazing Results, Geoffrey M. Bellman and Kathleen D. Ryan (Jossey-Bass, 2009).
Report by Stephanie Coronel, 2010.

Extraordinary Groups explores why some team experiences are exceptional and why others are not. It starts by describing eight key indicators of extraordinary groups based on Bellman and Ryan's field studies of 60+ groups. These key indicators are: a compelling purpose, shared leadership, just-enough-structure, full engagement, embracing differences, unexpected learning, strengthened relationships, and great results.

The authors then explore how to nurture extraordinary experiences using their Group Needs Model. The model focuses on six core group needs that form three pairs: one pair relates to the individual, one to the group, and the third to the world in which the group exists. The six core group needs are:

- **Self:** Acceptance of self while moving toward one's potential.
  - Acceptance is knowing and accepting ourselves for who we are.
  - Potential is sensing and growing into our fuller and better selves.
- **Group:** A bond with others that grows while pursuing a common purpose.
  - Bond is our shared sense of identify and belonging.
  - Purpose is the reason we come together.
- **World:** Understanding the reality of the world while collectively making an impact.
  - Reality is understanding and accepting the world as it is and how if affects us.
  - Impact is our intention to make a difference and our readiness to act.

At the heart of the Group Needs Model is transformation. Bellman and Ryan define transformation as a fundamental shift in individual perceptions that accelerates behavior change and personal vitality. By understanding and attending to the six group needs, group members are more likely to experience some sort of transformation and may feel energized, connected,

hopeful, and/or changed by the group experience. The book concludes with a discussion on how leaders can conduct themselves to help nurture extraordinary books.

The two concepts from the book that had the greatest impact for me are just-enough-structure and shared leadership. The concept of just-enough-structure allows team members to be collaborative, flexible, creative, and adaptive. Imposing too much structure can limit the team's thinking and creativity. Since there is often an impulse to add structure when things don't go as planned, I've begun to survey team members to get their perspective on the structure of our group. The concept of shared leadership teaches one to focus on seeing that the group is being led rather than on being the one constant leader.

Finally, the format of the book adds to the learning process because reflection and actions were built in throughout the book. After each section, Bellman and Ryan suggest reflection questions for the reader, and sample actions to take up with the group. Because of the format, I was more likely to stop and think about what I had just read and how it might apply to my work. Furthermore, the sample actions gave me great ideas for actions I may want to pursue with my team.

Fierce Leadership: A Bold Alternative to the Worst "Best" Practices of Business Today, Susan Scott (Crown Business, 2009).
Report by Alice Nightengale-Luhan, 2010.

Fierce Leadership is written in a conversational style that serves to communicate Scott's message that having real conversations is key to good management practice. The book illustrates that common practices such as anonymous performance reviews and holding people accountable really don't work to create a healthy, forward-thinking environment. Scott also identifies ways to put into practice the ideas she promotes, giving specific guidelines for implementing her "Fierce" practices in any organization (or relationship).

The idea behind using the word fierce to describe Scott's approach is to conjure up an attitude that suggests passion, intensity, and challenge rather than a standard neutral or even discouraging approach to leading a business. One important lesson this book has to offer is to not be afraid to ask for feedback on your organization and your ideas about how to lead the organization. Not only is it important to encourage feedback from all levels of the organization, it is important for the leader to be open and flexible so that the feedback received is obviously vetted.

Another very important lesson I learned is not to underestimate the value of emotional intelligence in making hiring decisions or in allocating personnel on projects. While technical expertise is important, an employee with a strong emotional intelligence will enhance and expand the possibilities both internally and externally. Emotional intelligence is critical in a successful leader as well.

Overall, this book encouraged me to think outside the box in leadership style. The book proposes ways to help identify the "best" practices that have been employed in the organization for years and what is not working about those practices, and then it helps to identify how to replace those "best" practices with "fierce" practices to achieve a healthier and more productive organization. From the discussion on emotional intelligence to practicing face-to-face feedback for staff, this book encourages a candid approach to relating to and within the organization at all levels.

Find Your Strongest Life: What the Happiest and Most Successful Women do Differently, Marcus Buckingham (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009).
Report by Karen Meyer, 2010.

For over twenty years, Marcus Buckingham has researched women and men regarding happiness and has developed questionnaires to address core issues. Through his questionnaires, Buckingham discovered that women are generally not happy and that women's happiness has declined steadily since 1972, as compared to men whose happiness has increased steadily during this same time. Through the creation of a show/workshop on Oprah, Buckingham investigated how women feel about their lives at home and at work, and what their strengths and fears are. Over half-a-million people logged on to Oprah.com and downloaded the workshop, and more than 100,000 people (mostly women) began posting messages asking for additional help, support, and advice. From this experience, Buckingham developed a mission statement: "My mission is to help each person identify her strengths, take them seriously, and offer them to the world." *Find Your Strongest Life* is also a product of this workshop.

For women to begin to understand their strengths, they need to discover the roles they were born to play. These roles can be discovered by taking Buckingham's on-line questionnaire, available at www.stronglifetest.com. There are twenty-three questions to answer and the results help to indicate one's lead and supporting roles. The roles and a sample of each are described below:

- **Advisor:** "What is the best thing to do?"
  - You know you're an **advisor** if you ask lots of questions.
  - Your strongest moments are when you discover the few critical improvements that make the difference. To make the most of your role, do your homework.
- **Caretaker:** "Is everyone OK?"
  - You know you are a **caretake**r if you want others to like you and you work to make them like you.
  - Your strongest moments are when friends confide in you. To make the most of your role, learn to use the goodwill you create.
- **Creator:** "What do I understand?"
  - You know you are a **creator** if you feel uncomfortable if a day goes by without producing some tangible sign of insight or understanding.
  - Your strongest moments are when you figure something out. To make the most of your role, take time to celebrate what you've achieved.
- **Equalizer:** "What's the right thing to do?"
  - You know you are an **equalizer** if you do best when deadlines and time frames are clear.
  - Your strongest moments are when you make things right when someone has been wronged. To make the most of your role, seek out situations that are messy and beg for structure.
- **Influencer:** "How can I move you to act?"
  - You know you are an **influencer** if you enjoy closing the sale.
  - Your strongest moments are when you find the right lever to move someone to action. To make the most of your role, seek out situations with inherent resistance.

- **Motivator:** "How can I raise the energy?"
  - You know you are a **motivator** if you have more social requests than you know what to do with.
  - Your strongest moments are when you laugh—and also when you cry. To make the most of your role, find if you are best at motivating people who are deeply unmotivated, or people who are doing just fine and need a jolt to take them to the next level.
- **Pioneer:** "What's new?"
  - You know you are a **pioneer** if you are quickly bored.
  - Your strongest moments are when you're starting something new. To make the most of your role, seek out experts to help prepare you for the challenges you are about to face.
- **Teacher:** "What can she learn from this?"
  - You know you are a **teacher** if you never give up on anybody.
  - Your strongest moments are when you find a story, a fact, or an object that you can use to help someone learn. To make the most of your role, define your own learning routine and then stick to it.
- **Weaver:** "With whom can I connect?"
  - You know you are a **weaver** if you have a large circle of acquaintances.
  - Your strongest moments are when you find common ground between two people who, on the surface, have little in common. To make the most of your role, choose an area of focus and develop your expertise within it.

Buckingham believes that "juggling" to balance all of life is a misnomer because when juggling, one is never actually holding on to the ball, it's just briefly touching your hand; there is little enjoyment in juggling. Creating a balanced life means catching the ball, cradling the ball, and beginning to discover your strengths to find that "strong life"!

Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time, Margaret J. Wheatley (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2007).
Report by Marsha McMurray-Avila, 2010.

In *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time,* Margaret Wheatley gathers many of her essays from the past ten years, which have been updated and revised to reflect her current thinking and designed to help us in "finding our way" to a more hopeful future. She describes this book as telling two stories that can be viewed as the themes running throughout all the essays.

The first story, or theme, describes the new paradigm of how living systems (including people) self-organize, change, create, learn, and adapt, and she applies this paradigm to answering many of the fundamental questions of leadership: "How do leaders shift from control to order? What motivates people? How does change happen? How do we evoke people's innate creativity? What are useful measurement systems? How do we solve complex problems? How do we create healthy communities? How do we lead when change is out of our control? How do we maintain our integrity and peace as leaders?"

None of these questions is answered with the traditional leadership approaches that are common in the literature (although I do see pieces of this new approach reflected in what we've

been learning through RIHEL). Wheatley promotes a total paradigm shift in thinking about how we view organizations and leadership in light of what we now know about how living systems organize and re-create themselves. The scientific foundation for this new approach, and for her multiple essays in *Finding Our Way*, is laid out in her seminal work, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, which I would subtitle as organizational development meets quantum physics.

Wheatley's basic premise is that we need to shift away from the "old story," the mechanical approach to viewing the world that has been the basis of Western culture for the last three hundred years, since that apple fell on Newton's head. This "old story" is characterized by Wheatley as:

> A story of dominion and control […] with a dream that it was within humankinds' province to understand the workings of the universe and to gain complete mastery over physical matter. This dream embraced the image of the universe as a grand clockwork machine. As with any machine, we would understand it by minute dissection, we would engineer it to do what we saw fit, and we would fix it through our engineering brilliance. This hypnotic image of powers beyond previous human imagination gradually was applied to everything we looked at: our bodies were seen as the ultimate machines; our organizations had all the parts and specifications to assure well-oiled performance, and in science, where it all began, many scientists confused metaphor with reality and believed life *was* a machine.

In contrast, the "new story" (although it is also very ancient and in many ways is a re-discovery) is about life as creating and connecting. "Setting aside our machine glasses, we can observe a world that exhibits life's ebullient creativity and life's need for other life. We observe a world where creative self-expression and embracing systems of relationships are the organizing energies, where there is no such thing as an independent individual, and no need for a leader to take on as much responsibility for us as we've demanded in the past."

In every essay, Wheatley walks with us down a new path that illustrates how the principles of creativity and self-expression interact with the need to be connected and in relationship with others and how these human life-forces help explain why people behave the way they do when placed into an organizational context, whether in the workplace, schools, communities, or families.

An example of one of the hundreds of insights I gained from this book was how the familiar behavior that we so quickly label "resistance to change" in organizational settings is actually a natural human response to losing autonomy. Humans are constantly changing and actually do it relatively naturally and easily when the change is a response to an internal need and they are involved in the creation and implementation of the change. "Resistance to change" is actually resistance to being controlled from outside. Change cannot be "engineered" from above. We know this and we observe this, but we still succumb to "models" and "best practices" and the newest management techniques to try to entice people to accept someone else's solution to their problem.

In response to this situation, Wheatley lays out examples in one essay for how to work with Life's Dynamics for Self-Organization and Change:

- A living system forms from shared interests.
- All change results from a change in meaning.
- Every living system is free to choose whether it changes.
- Systems contain their own solutions.

The second story, or theme, running through the book reflects Wheatley's sadness in her observation that despite everything we've been learning over the years from experiments with innovation, quality, learning organizations, and human motivation, leadership strategies seem to have "taken a great leap backward to the familiar territory of command and control" in the face of all the uncertainty confronting us in the 21st century. She asks, "How is it that we failed to learn that whenever we try to impose control on people and situations, we only serve to make them more uncontrollable?"

Although Wheatley paints a "fairly grim picture of these new organizational dynamics spawned by tumultuous times," she points out the paradox that holds hope for the path ahead: "It is possible to prepare for the future without knowing what it will be. The primary way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships, to how well we know and trust one another." In addition to being good advice for organizations, these words resonate on a personal level for me, giving me an anchor in this time of uncertainty in my own work. I do not know the future of my organization or my place in it, but I find my center by focusing on those moments when I feel connected with others and consciously cultivate relationships as the web that will sustain me through these uncertain times.

At a time when the complexity of the problems facing us as leaders can be overwhelming, it helps to hear a voice that points us back in a simple and basic direction: "Today, we need many more of us storytellers. The need is urgent because people are forgetting there is any alternative to the deadening leadership that daily increases in vehemence. It's truly a dark time because people are losing faith in themselves and each other and forgetting how wonderful humans can be, and how much hope we feel when we work well together on things we care about."

Even when reading some of the sections in *Finding Our Way* a second or third time, each time I feel like I'm reading it for the first time, and my brain explodes with some sudden new burst of insight. This book is full and rich with new ways of thinking; I will need extended periods of study and reflection with each point to really be able to integrate it into my life and work. At the same time, much of what I read also resonates in a very familiar way, like it's touching some thought or memory from the past and confirming what I already know. This is a book that I feel compelled to read over and over again.

First, Break All The Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (Simon & Schuster, 1999).
Report by Karen Valentine, 2010.

Based on a twenty-five year research study conducted by the Gallup Organization, two massive, in-depth studies were conducted to examine the qualities of great managers across a variety of industries. What the researchers found was that great managers had little in common. They differ in gender, age, and race. They employ vastly different styles and focus on different goals. Yet despite their differences, great managers share one common trait: they break all

"rules." They do not conform or follow the commonly accepted rules that make up a body of knowledge usually referred to as "conventional wisdom." For example:

- Treat everyone exactly the same in order to be fair to all employees.
- Spend your time with your weakest employees to bring up their level of competence.
- Don't be friends or socialize with your employees.
- Enforce company standards so that each employee follows every required step of each process.
- The best way to reward an employee is to give him a raise and better benefits.

The first study surveyed a million employees from a wide array of companies, industries, and countries to research the answer to the question, "What do the most talented employees need from the workplace?" The research identified twelve characteristics of a strong workplace that managers can use as a measuring stick to assess the strength of their workplace. When companies and managers create an environment where employees answer these questions positively, then they have built a great place to work, one where the best want to work and stay. The twelve questions are:

- Do I know what is expected of me at work?
- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
- At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- At work, do my opinions seem to count?
- Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
- Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
- Do I have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, has someone at worked talked to me about my progress?
- This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

In the second research project, the Gallop Organization focused on the question, "How do the world's greatest managers find, focus, and keep talented employees?" Researchers conducted 80,000 hour-and-a-half interviews with managers at every level of management. From that, they identified four key roles that great managers need to perform well in order to excel.

- Select for talent, rather than experience and skills.
- Define outcomes for employees and encourage each employee to reach those outcomes using the best method for that employee.
- Draw out each person's strengths rather than trying to fix weaknesses.
- Develop each employee by finding the right fit for him or her.

Additional important lessons derived from the book include:

- Know what can be taught, and what requires a natural talent.
- Set the right outcomes, not steps. Standardize the end but not the means. As long as the means are within the company's legal boundaries and industry standards, let the employee use his own style to deliver the result or outcome you want.
- Motivate by focusing on strengths, not weaknesses.
- Casting is important, if an employee is not performing at excellence, maybe she is not cast in the right role.
- Every role is noble, respect it enough to hire for talent to match.
- A manager must excel in the art of the interview. See if the candidate's recurring patterns of behavior match the role he is to fulfill. Ask open-ended questions and let him talk. Listen for specifics.
- Find ways to measure, count, and reward outcomes.
- Spend time with your best people. Give constant feedback. If you can't spend an hour every quarter talking to an employee, then you shouldn't be a manager.
- There are many ways of alleviating a problem or non-talent. Devise a support system; find a complementary partner or an alternative role for him.
- Do not promote someone until he reaches his level of incompetence; simply offer bigger rewards within the same range of his work. It is better to have an excellent, highly paid waitress or bartender on your team than promote him or her to a poor starting-level bar manager.
- Some homework to do: Study the best managers in the company and revise training to incorporate what they know. Send your talented people to learn new skills or knowledge. Change recruiting practices to hire for talent, revise employee job descriptions and qualifications.

First, Break All the Rules explores the challenges many companies face in attaining and keeping an employee, maintaining employee satisfaction, and learning how great mangers attract, hire, focus, and keep their most talented employees. The examples provided throughout the book provide great illustrations to the concepts and key points highlighted and discussed. The book is a useful tool for managers who wish to gain an understanding that in order to be great they must think outside the box and behave in ways uncharacteristic from what we've been taught.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass Publisher, 2002).
Report by Ken Johnson, 2010.

The role of a leader means to focus on collective outcomes, confront difficult issues, force clarity and closure, and manage conflict. In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team,* The Lencioni Team Effectiveness Model identifies five areas that leaders need to excel at in order to create effective teams:

- Trust
- Conflict

- Commitment
- Accountability
- Results

Because teams are made up of “fallible, imperfect human beings” there is a potential for dysfunction. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* is a great tool for improving teams and better understanding the levels of dysfunctions that teams face. It is important for employees to work well together in any type of organization. Focusing on teamwork and having leaders who are willing to own dysfunctions within their teams are critical steps in moving both teams and organizations forward.

Conquer Team Dysfunction: For any team to accomplish the results it sets out to achieve, it must first overcome five common dysfunctions:

Dysfunction #1: Absence of Trust. Members of great teams trust one another on fundamental and emotional levels, and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears, and behaviors. They get to a point where they can be completely open with one another, without filters; this is essential.

Dysfunction #2: Fear of Conflict. Teams that trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue about issues and decisions that are key to the organization’s success. They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, or question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions.

Dysfunction #3: Lack of Commitment. Teams that engage in unfiltered conflict are able to achieve genuine buy-in concerning important decisions, even when various members of the team initially disagree. That's because they ensure that all opinions and ideas are put on the table and considered, giving confidence to team members that no stone has been left unturned.

Dysfunction #4: Avoidance of Accountability. Teams that commit to decisions and standards of performance do not hesitate to hold one another accountable for adhering to those decisions and standards. What is more, they don't rely on the team leader as the primary source of accountability; they go directly to their peers.

Dysfunction #5: Inattention to Results. Teams that trust one another, engage in conflict, commit to decisions, and hold one another accountable are likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team. They do not give in to the temptation to place their departments, career aspirations, or ego-driven status ahead of the collective results that define team success.

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story, Ben Carson with Cecil Murphey (Zondervan, 1990).
Report by Nigel Guyot, 2010.

While reading *Gifted Hands,* I found it inspirational that a person who was an average student in both elementary and junior high school ended up being the first doctor to separate conjoined twins at the head. And it was enlightening to discover that Ben Carson is ordinary and humble, yet he believes anything is possible by following his simple approach to life: **THINK BIG.**

- **T**alent: Learn to recognize God given talents. **T**ime: Learn the importance of time.
- **H**ope: Anticipate good things and look for them.
- **I**nsight: Listen and learn from people that have already been there.
- **N**ice: Be nice to people.
- **K**nowledge: Is the key to independent living.
- **B**ooks: Active learning from reading is better than passive learning from listening or watching.
- **I**n-Depth Learning: In-depth learners find that acquired knowledge becomes a part of them and keeps building.
- **G**od: Never drop God out of your life.

THINK BIG works. Leading while using these principles works also; try applying the THINK BIG principles to coaching, difficult conversations, program management, project management, people management, budgets, nature, science, politics, etc.; these are useful tools to improve one's self in this world and make an impact on others.

The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care, T.R. Reid (The Penguin Press, 2009).
Report by Chima Nwizu, 2010.

In *The Healing of America,* Reid, by taking a global perspective to the issues, addresses our national health care problem. A problem he believes is undermining the physical and fiscal health of every American.

Reid acknowledges that health care in the U.S. is excessively expensive, ineffective, and unjust. While the U.S. boasts that it is the richest and most powerful nation among the world's developed nations, it actually ranks 37th in quality and fairness of national health care systems, placing the U.S. behind Dominica and Costa Rica and just ahead of Slovenia and Cuba. Yet, despite the low ranking, the U.S. unquestionably leads the world in spending. Even countries with considerably older populations than ours, implying more need for medical attention, spend much less than we do in the U.S. Japan, for example, with the oldest population in the world, whose citizens have an average of fourteen doctor-office visits per year, compared with five for the average American, spends about $3,000 per person, compared to $7,000 per person in the U.S.

Reid argues that a nation has the moral responsibility to provide its citizens free and quality health care. He points out that all the developed nations of the world (with exception of the U.S.) fulfill this moral obligation to its citizens. He states that since 1947, when the term "socialized medicine" was coined by a public relations firm working to disparage president Truman's proposal for a national health care system, that term socialized medicine has frequently been used to bring on the demise of debates on this issue.

Reid argues that most national health care systems are not "socialized" and that many foreign countries provide "universal" health care of high quality at reasonable cost using private doctors, private hospitals, and private plans. Some countries that offer universal health coverage have smaller governmental roles than the U.S. does. Reid says that the U.S. presently runs some of the purest socialized medicine that one can find anywhere through (1) the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a government operated system with government owned clinics, hospitals, and doctors, and where the veterans receive free medical care; and (2) the Medicare system, which covers 44 million elderly or disabled Americans. In the Medicare system, the federal government makes the rules and pays the bills. Reid points out that both of these "socialized" health care systems are enormously popular with the people who use them and consistently rate high in surveys of patient satisfaction.

Reid also discusses four other health care models used in other countries:

- **The Bismark Model**: This system is used by Germany, Japan, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and to some degree in Latin America. This model uses private health insurance plans and private health care providers, and is financed by both employers and employees through payroll deductions. The private health insurance companies are basically charities (non-profit) unlike for-profit U.S. insurance companies.
- **The Beveridge Model:** This model is used in Britain, Italy, Spain, most of Scandinavia, and Hong Kong. In this system, the health care is provided and financed by the government through tax payment. There are no medical bills; rather, it is a "free at the point of service" system. It is a public service like the fire department or the public library. In this model, many hospitals and clinics are owned by the government, some doctors are government employees, and some are private doctors who are reimbursed by the government for their services. The government, being the sole payer, controls what doctors can do or charge; the per capita, therefore, tends to be low.
    - Americans consider this model "socialized medicine," even though the purest form of the "socialized medicine" model is found in only two countries: Cuba and United States, that is, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

- **The National Health Insurance:** This is the model used in Canada and has elements of both the Bismark and Beveridge models. Here, the providers of health care are private and the payer is the government-run insurance program that every citizen pays into. The national, or provincial, plan collects monthly premiums and pays medical bills. The cost of running this system is low because there is no need for marketing, no expensive underwriting offices to deny claims, no profit. As a single payer, they negotiate lower prices. This system is, however, notorious for keeping patients on waiting lists.
- **The Out-of-Pocket Model:** This model is found mostly in poor nations with limited infrastructure whose governments are too disorganized to provide any kind of mass medical care. It is characterized by out-of-pocket payment at the point of care. In this system, only the rich get medical care. The poor receive either no medical care or, at best, poor-quality care.

Covering everybody in a unified system creates a powerful political dynamic for managing the cost of health care. Universal coverage also enhances health care results by improving the overall health of a nation. If people have access to a doctor, they can get the diagnostic and preventive treatment that will keep them healthy. Beyond those practical reasons for universal coverage, of course, there is the basic moral imperative. Does a wealthy country have an ethical obligation to provide access to health care for everybody? Do we want to live in a society that lets tens of thousands of our neighbors die each year, and hundreds of thousands face financial ruin, because they can't afford medical care when they're sick? In response to these questions, every developed country except the United States has reached the same conclusion: everybody should have access to medical care. Having made that decision, the other nations have organized health care systems to meet that fundamental moral goal. If the United States made the same moral choice to provide universal coverage, then we too could design a fair, efficient, and high-quality health care system for all Americans. And the principles we've learned from studying the other industrialized democracies will help us create that new health care system.

A Higher Standard of Leadership: Lessons from the Life of Gandhi, Keshavan Nair (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1994).
Report by David Cobb, 2010.

In *A Higher Standard of Leadership*, Nair outlines three principles, which are broken down into fifteen steps, that outline a leadership framework drawn from the life and principles exemplified in the life of Gandhi. The book focuses on developing strong personal and collective moral principles and incorporating these principles into policies, strategies, and laws. The "value based" decision making exemplified throughout the book encourages readers to close the gap between their professional and personal standards and, therefore, benefiting from having their work become an extension of their personal beliefs. The author further argues that although power is associated with leadership, the only legitimate purpose of this power is service. Perhaps more importantly, and timely, the book also emphasizes the importance of raising the expectations of those being led and the need for mutual respect and tolerance. The target audience is anyone in a formal or informal leadership role (CEO, manager, parent, teacher, elder, etc.).

Highlights: Gandhi was a unique leader in that other leaders of his time (Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Patton, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin) all drew their power from holding a political office (positional power) and/or commanding armies (force/violence). By contrast, Gandhi never held a political position, never commanded an army, and had no connection to any international organization. In fact, his guiding principles of nonviolence, respect for others, and service to others were, and are, considered by many to be naïve. However, "armed" with these principles, Gandhi defeated the most powerful nation in the world at the time, the British Empire, for the sake of India's independence. Gandhi promoted religious tolerance, brought much needed social reform to India's caste system, increased economic reforms for India's poor, influenced other great social movements (e.g., Martin Luther King in the U.S. and Mandela in Africa), and was a leader for equal rights for all citizens in South Africa.

Building on specific examples from many of Gandhi's "life experiments," the book provides a roadmap for today's leaders based on observations of Gandhi's life:

- **Single Standard of Conduct**
  - Commit to values
  - Commit to the journey
  - Develop the guide (training)
  - Reduce attachments
  - Minimize secrecy
  - Develop the essential quality—courage
- **Spirit of Service**
  - Focus on responsibilities
  - Perform values-based service
  - Make the commitment to personal service
  - Understand the people you wish to serve
  - Reconcile power with service
- **Decisions and Actions Bounded by Moral Principles**
  - Establish principles of governance
  - Create integrity in decision making
  - Change criteria for decision making
  - Implement decisions within moral constraint

Whereas many books on leadership focus on techniques for managing people to be more efficient and teach "buying into" a shared vision, this book makes the connection between one's larger personal life and work goals, the decisions made in one's daily life, and how one leads. *A Higher Standard of Leadership* has not only inspired me to be more cognizant of how my personal convictions are incorporated into my professional circle of influence but also how these convictions manifest themselves in my personal life, including consumer choices.

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas, David Bornstein (Oxford University Press, 2007).
Report by Jean MacKenzie-Wyatt, 2010.

In *How to Change the World*, Bornstein provides numerous stories of amazing individuals and describes how each one of these leaders has made a difference in our world. Bornstein discusses the steps each one undertook to become successful. Highlighted below are several of the leaders that I found most noteworthy, including their respective exemplary leadership skills.

Bill Drayton established Ashoka, so named to honor Ashoka, the Indian leader who unified the Indian subcontinent in the 3rd century BC, renounced violence, and dedicated his life to social welfare and economic development. For his creativity, global mindedness, and tolerance, Ashoka is renowned as the earliest example of a social innovator. Drayton's theory is to appoint creative individuals with fixed determination and an indomitable will to assist small socially responsible businesses. Drayton saw a problem and envisioned a new solution; he took the initiative to act on a vision, gather the resources, and build organizations to protect and market his vision. Drayton wouldn't take no for an answer.

Fabo Rosa delivered electricity to poor people. Despite all the problems such as lack of support and competition and intervention from larger companies, he still saw himself as the central mover of events.

Vinoba Bhave is a social reformer and is known as India's walking saint. One of Ghandi's key disciples, Bhave exhorted villagers to transfer portions of land to a cooperative ownership system in order to support landless people.

David McClelland explored the motivational qualities of entrepreneurs and defined what he believes to be three dominant human motivations: power, affiliation, and achievement.

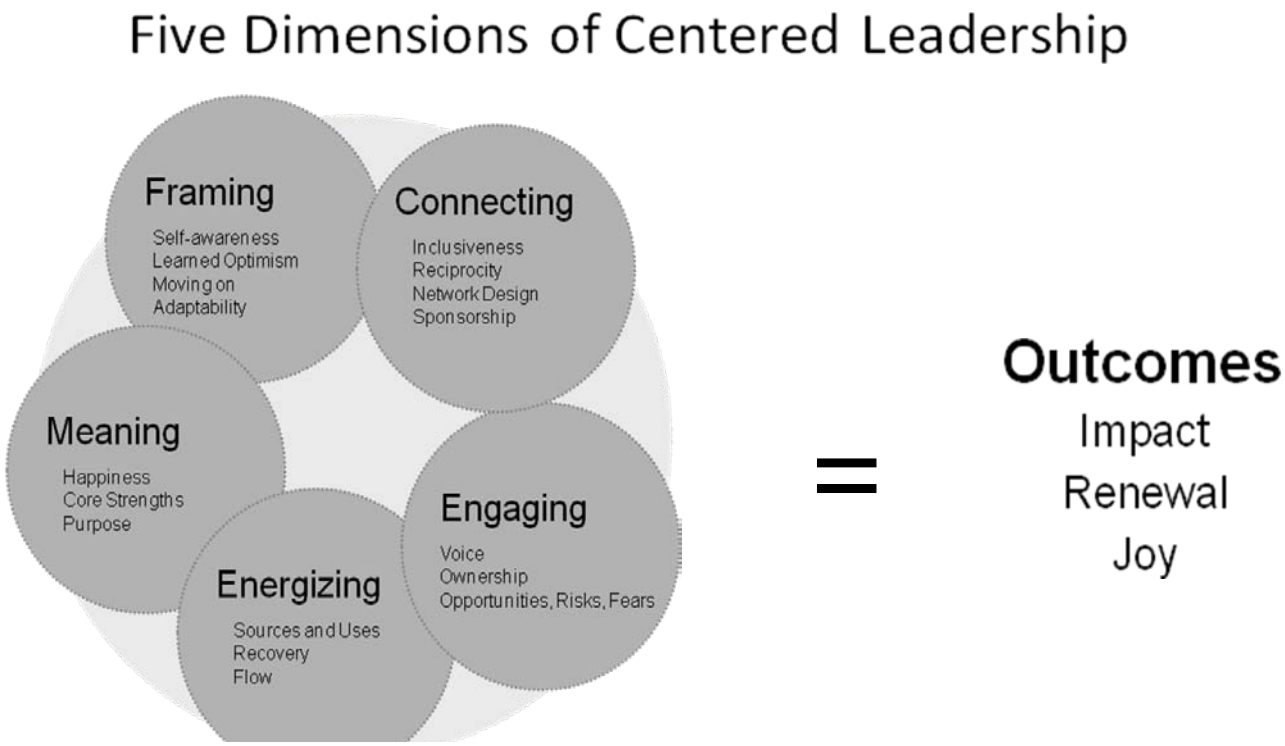
Florence Nightengale demonstrated a combination of tact, political influence, calm authority, rigid attention, fixed determination, stern discipline, and practical creativity. She had an unwavering belief in the rightness of her ideas.

Jeroo Billimore is the founder of Childline, a twenty-four-hour helpline for children in distress. She believed that a person can be most successful if they do not work in isolation, if they focus on giving of themselves, and if they give others a sense of their own power.

Overall, Bornstein emphasizes that one needs to let go, and that when leaders are attempting to reach goals, they must understand that everything will not be exactly the way they want it to be. A leader must learn to let people take charge. Bornstein believes the best thing is not to have a picture of what is wanted but, rather, to exhibit and live by basic principles. He also stresses that if ideas are to take root and spread, they need champions; ideas need a person with a vision, integrity of purpose, drive, great persuasive powers, and remarkable stamina.

How Remarkable Women Lead: The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life, Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston (Crown Publishing Group, 2009).
Report by Jaslyn Dobrahner, 2010.

In *How Remarkable Women Lead*, Barsh and Cranston have created a unique leadership framework upon which the book is based:



Meaning: This is the foundation of Centered Leadership: women need to have meaningful work that brings them happiness and speaks to their own dreams of a right livelihood in order to become successful leaders.

Framing: Framing is similar to one's perspective—are you looking through rose-colored glasses? In all of their research on women leaders, the authors never found a female leader who wasn't an optimist. Yet, many of these leaders also considered themselves realists at the same time.

Connecting: Building relationships and connecting to a vast network of people is a critical aspect of Centered Leadership. Inclusiveness is particularly important not only as a way to inspire others but also as a way to draw upon others for support and sponsorship.

Engaging: In Centered Leadership, "engaging" is where the rubber meets the road. In order for leaders to emerge, they must take that first step into the unknown by choosing to act on opportunities that carry risk and uncertainties. For many women leaders, this starts with finding one's own voice and assuming ownership of one's career.

Energizing: If **meaning** is the foundation of Centered Leadership, then energizing is what keeps everything going. This chapter spoke particularly to women and their commitments inside and outside of the home. The authors urge women to let go of the notion of complete control and replace it with the notion of managing your actual energy within a personal framework of what is important to you.

How Remarkable Women Lead is a holistic, or whole-person, approach to leadership. Although all of the examples were of women leaders, the book and the Centered Leadership

principles are applicable to men and women alike. The book also spoke to me because it wasn't a "remedy for leadership" or a "step-by-step" guide. Rather, the book presents three clusters of capabilities and tactics, **framing**, **connecting**, and **engaging**, with **meaning** as an underlying foundation and **energizing** for sustainment. For me, this approach to leadership seems more applicable, doable, and achievable, especially within their context of time management and energy.

Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization (Leadership for the Common Good), Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey (Harvard Business School Press, 2009).
Report by Lisa Cohen, 2010.

Immunity to Change examines why change is so challenging and provides not only a new way to view change through theoretical and empirical foundations but also offers a framework for recognizing that by identifying our own immunities to change, the possibilities for ourselves and our organizations are immense. The brain has a capacity to adapt throughout life, albeit the ability to change often seems daunting. Kegan and Lahey propose using an immunity map (an x-ray) to examine where individual change may shift when behaviors are compared to goals.

Immunity Map/X-Ray:

Visible Commitment	Doing/Not-Doing	Hidden Competing Commitments	Big Assumptions
*Improvement goal *Adaptive	*Concrete behaviors	*Commitment to change	

The lens of adult patterns can be seen through levels of mental complexity from less to more complex developmentally:

- **Socialized mind:** shaped by definitions and expectations of our personal environment.
- **Self-authoring mind:** personal authority evaluates and makes choices about external expectations.
- **Self-transforming mind:** reflect on limits of ideology or personal authority for hold on multiple systems.

The challenges to change may be due to either a technical challenge, such as a skill set that is not fully developed, or to an adaptive challenge, which entails transforming a mindset. In order to address an adaptive challenge, thinking and feeling need to be synchronized. One must identify what they really want and define what keeps them from achieving desired outcomes. Essentially, the way of knowing can increase mental complexity as a look *at* perspective instead of just looking *through* it. Yet, the shift ultimately occurs when one defines their x-ray and then asks for support from others to monitor progress. Desire and motivation alone do not address what hinders us from changing ourselves. Instead, this active process of discovery, which leads one through a psychological process, takes self-awareness to the next stage. The immunity map can also be utilized as a collective process within an organization.

How leaders can lead the way in the **immunity-to-change process:**

- Encourage growth and development individually and within an organization.
- Recognize the distinction between technical and adaptive learning.
- Support an individual's motivation to grow.
- Recognize that change in mindset takes time and commitment.
- Identify that shifting must involve thinking and feeling.
- Know that change in mindset and behavior must work reciprocally.
- Create a safe environment for risk taking to change minds.

Continuously developing human capability so that talent grows, aspirations are fulfilled, and future possibilities previously unexplored have the potential to flourish happens if we take personal responsibility to a more complex level of the individual mind. Simply put, "What is the one most important thing you are personally working to get better at?" In fact, committing to a developmental process will indeed make one more receptive. If the challenge is embraced to confront the anxieties that may arise and are redirected through the immunity-to-change process, then the transformations both within an individual and in an organization can be monumental. Never believe that change is impossible. Don't be limited by your own perceptions.

It's Not About The Coffee, by Howard Behar and Janet Goldstein (Penguin Group, 2009). Report by Peter Monahan, 2010.

It's Not About the Coffee discusses the importance of putting people first. This book shares the philosophy and experiences on leadership Behar lived and practiced during his career as a senior executive at Starbucks. Behar coached hundreds of leaders at every level of Starbucks, from the coffee growers to the roasters to the baristas, where he stressed the importance of putting people over profits. He understood how important the people who worked for him were, and he knew how to bring out the best in them. He showed excellent customer service to the employees of Starbucks who, in turn, provided excellent customer service to the patrons of Starbucks.

Following are the leadership principles Behar followed that focus on human relationships:

Know who you are; wear one hat. Be clear about your values, purpose, and goals. Success is related to your clarity and honesty about who you are, who you're not, where you want to go, and how you're getting there.

Know why you're here; do it because it's right, not because it's right for your resume. Success comes from doing things for the right reasons. If you don't know what you're trying to accomplish and not everyone is on board, success will be hard to obtain. There is a purpose and passion in yourself and the people you lead.

Think independently: the person who sweeps the floor should choose the broom. Encourage independent thinking in others and yourself. People are human beings who have the ability to achieve.

Build trust: care like you really mean it. Caring is a sign of strength, not a weakness. Without trust and caring you'll never know what's possible.

Listen for the truth: the walls talk. Take the time to listen, even to what's not said, and you'll learn solutions to problems that have been waiting to be told.

Be accountable: only the truth sounds like the truth. Take responsibility, there are no secrets and no lies. Only the truth sounds like the truth. Being truthful must start with you first. If you're not accountable, both in words and actions, then you can't expect others to be.

Take action: think like a person of action, and act like a person of thought. Be passionate, show purpose, and be persistent.

Practice leadership: the big noise and the still, small voice. Leaders are ordinary human beings. Leading can be noisy, with lots of distractions. Listen to your still, small voice. Don't let big noises crowd out the truth.

Dare to dream: say "yes," the most powerful word in the world. Big dreams mean big goals, big hopes, and big joys. Say "yes" and enjoy all that you are doing, and help others to do the same.

While these principles that Behar followed seem to follow common and ethical sense, the reality comes down to how well you work with people. First you have to know something about yourself in order to work with people and earn their trust. Once you have core values that you actually live by, you can then reach out and lead others because you are worth following.

It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy, Captain D. Michael Abrashoff (Warner Books, 2002).
Report by Bryon Hopper, 2010.

It's Your Ship discusses the management techniques learned and utilized by Captain (ret.) Abrashoff when he was Commander of the USS Benfold. Abrashoff organized and lead a crew of 310 men and women—turning what was a somewhat disgruntled crew into the top crew in the Pacific Fleet and the ship into the best ship in the entire U.S. Navy. To succeed, Captain Abrashoff built upon personal leadership experiences, both good and bad, that he had gained throughout his career to develop his own leadership style.

One of the reasons I was attracted to this book is that I am a firm believer in the same leadership theories Abrashoff espouses in *It's Your Ship*; namely, that until proven otherwise, each individual is inherently talented and, given the training, direction, parameters, and freedom to accomplish a given task, they will prove their capabilities, many times exceeding expectations. This also leads to a natural course of growth (i.e., leadership development) for individuals as well. If an individual is given the freedom to succeed at their level, often times they will then take on more challenging/higher level tasks, which can lead to a process of continual growth within comfortable/controllable parameters for the individual. As individuals succeed and produce positive outcomes for the organization, other individuals react with positive achievements and the organization becomes increasingly more unified.

- Create a Climate of Trust
- Look for Results not Salutes
- Strengthen Others
- Generate Unity

Captain Abrashoff also brought out the following valuable points, which he made clear to the crew of the Benfold: We should always ask ourselves, "Is there a better way of doing

things?" If we, as leaders, continually do things the same way that they have always been done and run our organizations in the same way that they have always been run, we and our organizations will never change for the better.

- Take Calculated Risks
- Go Beyond Standard Operating Procedure

Employee motivation and organizational buy-in are critical to the success of meeting challenges and goals. Leaders want their people to have passion, energy, and enthusiasm for what they are doing. A little bit of time spent exploring where an employee is coming from and how to help them get to where they want to be is invaluable. Treat employees with respect and lead by example and employees will generally follow your lead. A leader must set the attitudes and behaviors that are expected. If this isn't demonstrated, individuals will follow what they believe to be correct. There is nothing wrong with having a pleasant and enjoyable environment in which to work.

- Communicate Purpose and Meaning
- Listen Aggressively
- Lead by Example
- Cultivate Quality of Life

Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of all Time, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges (Thomas Nelson Press, 2008).
Report by Christie Mettenbrink, 2010.

In *Leading Like Jesus*, Blanchard and Hodges posit that learning to lead like Jesus is more than an announcement, it's a commitment to lead in a different way. It's a transformational cycle that begins with a personal relationship, moves to leading others in one-on-one relationships, then to leading a team or a group, and, finally, to leading an organization or community. Leadership isn't something one does to people; it's something done with people. Knowing the answer to the question of who you are impacts the nature of your relationship with others. Leaders must first address the issue of their own credibility at the personal level, then on a one-on-one level, and then on a team leadership level if they want to try to drive change at an organizational level.

To lead like Jesus involves the alignment of four leadership domains: heart, head, hands, and habits. The internal domains, the motivations of one's heart and the leadership perspectives of one's head, are things one can keep inside or even disguise if it suits one's purpose. The external domains, one's public leadership behavior, or hands, and one's habits as experienced by others, will determine whether people will follow a leader.

The most persistent barrier to leading like Jesus is a heart motivated by self-interest. If, as a leader, you want to follow the mandate Jesus gave us to serve rather than be served, you have to realize that every day you will face challenges to your good intentions. To resist the temptation to be drawn off course, a leader must understand the dynamics of a self-serving ego that "Edges God Out." Questions to ask one's self would be: Is your sense of self-worth tied to how well you perform and the opinion of other people? If so, how likely are you to react when your performance isn't good enough or if people don't agree or approve of your actions?

Leadership is about going somewhere. Effective leadership begins with a clear vision, whether that vision is for your personal life, your family, or an organization. If your followers don't know where you're going, they'll have a hard time getting excited about the journey. Once people have a clear vision of where you want to take them and why, the leadership emphasis switches to the second role of leadership—implementation. The leader now becomes a servant of the vision, by serving people who are being asked to act according to the vision and to accomplish the goals. The key activity to an effective servant leader is to act as a performance coach. When Jesus called his disciples to follow Him, He pledged them His full support and guidance as they developed into "fishers of men." This is the duty of a servant leader—the ongoing investment of the leader's life into the lives of those that follow.

Leading like Jesus is not a course but a lifestyle. Making the development of people an equal partner with performance is a decision one makes. It's about leaving a leadership legacy of service. This is a daily journey and challenge rather than a final destination. It can be done only in and through the power of the Holy Spirit in your life and committed relationships—first with God and then with others.

Leadership is an Art, Max De Pree (Currency, 2004).
Report by Stephanie Denning, 2010.

In *Leadership is an Art*, DePree, former CEO of Herman Miller, Inc., describes, in a personal and almost folksy narrative, his philosophy of leadership. His basic premise is that leadership is an art that requires "liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible." The ability to do this comes as much from following the heart as from following any formula, process, or prescription.

In this book, DePree talks about "tribal storytelling" as being an integral part of being a good leader, and he says that "the penalty for failing to listen is to lose one's history, one's historical context, one's binding values." His contention is that without that connection to the story of the past, any group of people will lose their sense of who they are.

Three key themes run through the book and DePree uses them to give the stories he tells context and meaning regarding his approach to "artful" leadership. Virtually everything he discusses throughout the book involves one or all of these three core ideas:

- Integrity, pure and simple. "Structures do not have anything to do with trust. People build trust."
- An indispensable knack for building and nurturing relationships. As DePree says, "It is fundamental that leaders endorse a concept of persons."
- The crucial nature of community building. "A covenantal relationship rests on shared commitments to ideas, to issues, to values, to goals, and to management processes."

DePree also discusses the value that his company has derived from a commitment to something called the Scanlon Plan—the idea that workers who suggest business improvements directly participate in the financial gains derived from those improvements. This idea has been around in manufacturing for many years, and Herman Miller, Inc. has integrated it into its overall organizational culture quite successfully.

Finally, DePree focuses on communication. He contends that communication—open, honest, logical, compassionate, and sound communication—is our ethical obligation and shows our respect for individuals for whom we work, as well as those who work with and for us.

Leadership Approach

DePree talks about the need for having both pitchers who can throw fastballs (the people who create the big yet focused visions of where the organization can go), and catchers who can catch them (the people who can help the organization realize those visions). He proposes a list of the eight essential rights for pitchers and catchers that nicely sums up his overall leadership approach:

- The right to be needed—a meaningful personal relationship to the group's goals.
- The right to be involved—a system of input and response that involves everyone in both the risks and rewards.
- The right to a covenantal relationship (vs. a contractual relationship)—a commitment to shared values, beliefs, and goals versus a legal or technical "quid pro quo" of working together.
- The right to understand—clarity about our role and responsibility in the group and those of others in the group.
- The right to affect one's own destiny—involvement in everything that affects us.
- The right to be accountable—sharing in the ownership of the group's goals allows us each to be accountable for them.
- The right to appeal—the ability to question the leader and the group without fear of reprisal.
- The right to make a commitment—can each person answer "yes" to the question: "Is this a place where they will let me do my best?"

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Approach

Certainly the strengths of DePree's approach to leadership are easy to see:

- Personal commitment and loyalty to the organization.
- Alignment of personal and professional beliefs, values, goals.
- Meaningful connection to each other and to the organization as a whole.
- Efficiency and effectiveness because each individual is personally committed and accountable.

Weaknesses are more subtle:

- The personal discipline required to be this kind of leader.
- The vulnerability of building and maintaining these kinds of relationships.
- The commitment of all to participate in this kind of leadership.
- Anything that is more "art" than science often is more difficult to master.

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading, Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky (Harvard Business School Press, 2002).
Report by Rainey Wikstrom, 2010.

In *Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*, Heifetz and Linsky address the inherent emotional risks and rewards of leadership. This book is about those who lead, the risks

they take, the mistakes often made, and the ways leaders can sustain themselves during both the difficult and rewarding times of leadership.

Leaders are those who are willing to take personal risks to say what needs to be said, address problems still unacknowledged, and challenge the status quo. The nature of leadership is a high-stakes role the authors equate to walking a tight rope but, they also suggest, the rewards are great and the gains are potentially much greater than any one person.

Human nature has an inherent risk aversion, so asking others to change habits, beliefs, or values puts the leader is a position of high risk. Ultimately, to mobilize people to change, a leader must engage people in adjusting their unrealistic expectations. During this phase, referred to as the adaptive phase, it is essential to remain engaged with the team, or those being led, and encourage them to seek out resources and solutions. Leaders risk the danger of becoming "technicians" during difficult times and disengaging from the team to find solutions and policy that will solve the problem for the group. But it is essential to stay connected with the team during the adaptive phase, which is often an uncomfortable phase of change where teams and leaders need to remain connected while the team solves its own challenges and adapts to new ways. It is also imperative to acknowledge the "loss" the team is feeling while adapting. Getting others to move requires a "leap of faith" to see past their potential losses. They must be convinced to move beyond the familiar and redefine themselves.

A leader who is urging others to give something up (i.e., change) risks becoming marginalized, diverted, attacked, or seduced. These are potential risks a leader assumes, but a leader must be able to see that the group is only trying to preserve the equilibrium or status quo. Betrayal is common during periods of difficulty or change. Leadership requires disturbing people, but "only at a level they can accept." It is inevitable that leaders will take heart to the more difficult aspects of leadership, such as these, but is important to "keep heart" in the difficult periods of leadership. It's easy to get down on one's self or to despair, but a leader must be able to keep the larger vision in mind during difficult periods and to be able to maintain and articulate the vision.

One common mistake leaders make is avoiding interaction with the "opposition." Rather, leaders are encouraged to keep the opposition close in order to stay in tune with the goals and needs of the opposition and, thus, be more likely to reach a mutually agreeable outcome.

Heifetz and Linsky encourage leaders to have a sanctuary and place to restore themselves. They also emphasize the importance of personal reflection and action in concert with each other. Having both alternating periods of reflection and action allows leaders to both see and act effectively. Acting without reflection or reflection without action, are ineffective leadership strategies. The authors describe the reflection time as "being on the balcony," or being able to see the performance but not be part of it. This stepping back allows for times of reflection, which seeds subsequent action or next steps.

The authors encourage all to keep an open heart and to guard against becoming cynical. They believe that to be a good leader, one must maintain their love for others. The authors summarize that the reason why leaders lead is to reach deeper levels of connection to those being led. They believe that ultimately, leaders lead because of their care or love of others. The authors were hesitant to use this word love, but they felt that it is central to why leaders lead. Another word that might be used is compassion.

Make the Right Choice: Creating a Positive, Innovative and Productive Work Life, Joel Zeff (Wiley, 2007).
Report by Scott Patefield, 2010.

This book made for an easy read by mixing humor with great strategies and ideas for making the workplace more fun, comfortable, supportive, and less stressful. At the end of each chapter, Zeff lays out a brief overview and a list of different ideas to use on a day-to-day basis. *Make the Right Choice* opened my eyes to how easy it is to help make coworkers feel empowered to take ownership of their tasks, which will increase an employee's ability to be happy and have fun.

Zeff starts out by giving humorous advice on how important it is to give, as well as receive, positive support. Everyone appreciates getting a nod for a job well done. This is sometimes an overlooked concept, but it is easy to reach out and show someone how appreciative you are of their effort.

Opportunity allows employees to have ownership and responsibility, which will make the employee or manager care. "Caring turns into passion...do you have passion for anything that you don't care about?"

Stress at work will make an employee lose their passion for work. By being open and flexible to change, stress can be managed relatively easily. This will enable an employee to focus on more important things while remaining passionate, creative, and energized.

Zeff emphasizes the importance of having fun at work: "Fun is our fuel for creativity, leadership, passion and success. Yet we don't really spend any time thinking about fun. Anybody can have fun. We just have to make the choice." Just because your work is serious, it doesn't mean you can't have fun in the process.

Communication should make you and your listener feel confident, comfortable, and in control. It is important to stay in the moment and listen to others to know how much detail is needed to keep the other tuned in while not overwhelming them with details.

"To be successful, you have to stay in the game." If you get frustrated and quit, the game stops and you're guaranteed to fail. Again, it is important to stay positive in order to succeed. As a manager, it is important to encourage and support employees and not enable them to quit. People quit because they are afraid to take a risk, or are afraid of what others will think of them.

Don't focus on obstacles; it will hinder creativity, also known as problem solving. Analyzing and creating should not be done at the same time. A creative session should be broken into two parts, first is the creation of ideas and then comes the analysis of those ideas. If you can stop creating rules where rules don't exist, you can expand the possibilities. By rewarding time spent on creating ideas, it encourages the creative process, even if the ideas are not used.

Successful teams are comprised of individuals who are willing to help everyone else achieve success and take responsibility for their role and do the best job possible. Your success is based on the success of others.

One: The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership, Lance Secretan (The Secretan Center Inc., 2006).
Report by Linda Sobeck, 2010.

> We have been living with an illusion: that we are separate. Whenever we experience pain or sadness, it is because we have become separated from what, or whom, we love. And whenever we are inspired or joyful, it is because we are one with what, or whom, we love. All human challenges and successes can be explained through this awareness. (Lance Secretan)

In *One: The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership,* Secretan provides a foundation upon which to build his theories of leadership. The central theme in his work is that unity can provide for powerful leadership skills. As the title of the book suggests, Secretan appeals to a more spiritual and holistic approach to business, leadership, and life in general. The book describes a requisite need to dispense with the distinction between our work and personal and social lives by understanding that we are all connected, integrated human beings with a basic need to belong and feel valued in every aspect of our life.

Like many books on leadership, Secretan has an acronym that stands for the principles of conscious leadership. The CASTLE principles are a set of practices that lead to awareness and an integrated means to live and lead:

Courage: "Because every important transformation begins with courage; therefore, it is the first step towards consciousness."

Authenticity: "Because internal alignment—oneness—is spiritually, emotionally, and physically healing, builds relationships, and helps us to become one, first within ourselves, and then with others."

Service: "Because service is a gift to others that makes competition, aggression, and self-interest irrelevant. We are one."

Truthfulness: "Because truthfulness builds respect and love between people. We are one."

Love: "Because the greatest human need is to love and be loved—in every part of our lives—at work and in our personal lives. It is what builds great relationships—everywhere."

Effectiveness: "Because our lives, at work and at play, will be more successful and fulfilled when we achieve our physical, material, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual goals—when we are effective."

Secretan uses lovely quotes from celebrated leaders, philosophers, and authors, such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Aristotle, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Walt Whitman, to illustrate how basic principles of conscious leadership have been applied in profound ways. These quotes are interwoven with success stories of business leaders that have adopted the practice of conscious leadership to exert change in their companies. This combination of poetic illustration and colorful storytelling paint a vivid picture of how the practice of conscious leadership could transform our way of doing business.

Many of Secretan's words, stories, and quotes resonated with how I view the world. Much of this book validated my own needs to serve others, have a sense of belonging, and create

an atmosphere of respect and acceptance. I also feel that our work ought to be a reflection of our selves because there is little distinction between how we operate at home versus at work.

That said, my inner pragmatic manager from the Midwest had trouble following Secretan down his path and into a work world where we are all connected as "One." I was especially triggered by his discussion of love in the workplace. I think we are a far cry from creating and accepting a business vocabulary that includes "love" as an everyday verb, even in Boulder. If we could get there, though, I think we would all feel more secure, productive, and welcome in our own skin—a benefit that surely would go with us from home to work and back.

Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell (Hachette Book Group, 2008).
Report by Jesse Weaver, 2010.

Outliers: The Story of Success is about those individuals or groups that achieve an extraordinary level of success in some endeavor. Gladwell defines success quite broadly and believes it is not limited to the usual things that come to mind, such as the accumulation of wealth or power. While those things are covered, the discussion also ranges, for example, from why some groups are more likely to succeed at math to why some airlines are more likely to achieve a higher safety rating.

Gladwell's basic argument is that the old adage "he's a self-made man" is false, regardless of the man or woman, or the endeavor under examination. Environmental factors, some of which can be controlled and some of which cannot, are present in every success story and play an inexorable role in the final outcome.

Among the factors at play are:

- One's cultural background (e.g., the rigid hierarchy in some cultures make culturally homogenous flight crews more likely to crash because no one is willing to speak up to the captain if they notice an issue, since it is culturally unacceptable to question someone in authority).
- The number of hours one is able to spend mastering a particular task—10,000 hours being the magic number. (Bill Gates and the Beatles, for example, were presented with situations that lead them to the 10,000 hour mark early on.)
- The structure of one's language (e.g., the way in which Asian cultures denote numbers lends to a much higher success rate in mathematics).

Factors that may not play the central role once thought are:

- IQ
- Perseverance
- Gumption or motivation
- The presence of a great idea

In some respects, it may seem that the book paints a picture that each person's chance at extraordinary success in life is predetermined, which can be a depressing thought. However, the leadership lesson I came away with is far less gloomy. Although, according to Gladwell, the idea of "a self-made man" may be false, the adage "you can't judge a book by its cover" rings true. There are countless variables at play that can make a person successful or unsuccessful. When attempting to judge a person's probability of success at a given task (as leaders can be required

to do) it is important to look beyond the normal metrics we as a society rely heavily on: determination, IQ, etc. Being able to recognize tasks that may present issues for specific team members as well as recognizing barriers that may currently be hampering someone's success is crucial to maintaining a productive and successful team. This book makes it clear that the barriers may come from things you might never have thought to investigate. As with the airline example, the company in question was able to identify the cultural issues that were present, infuse a cultural mix into their flight crews, and achieve a stellar safety record.

The Power of a Positive No: Save the Deal Save The Relationship and Still Say No, William Ury (Bantam, 2007).
Report by Sabine Kortals, 2010.

> A "no" uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a "yes" merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trouble. (Mahtama Gandhi)

William Ury's book, *The Power of A Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes,* is immensely helpful in addressing the challenges of how to say "no" in an effective and understanding way, especially when confronted with situations in which one feels compelled to agree to something even when not completely on board with the idea or when saying "yes" does not reflect what or who is most important on a personal level. Ury offers several key lessons one can apply and practice as a means to achieve and sustain the utmost in personal and professional integrity.

Prepare

- Uncover your "yes."
  - Consider what you are *for*, not what you are *against.*
  - Identify your interests, needs, and values.
  - Distill a single intention.
  - Accept your emotions (even "negative" emotions, like anger) and turn them into positive resolve.
    - *Note:* These steps ground you in something positive, provide a sense of direction, and fuel your "no" in the face of resistance.
- Empower your "no."
  - Devise a Plan B, a course of action to address your interests if the other person does not accept your "no." That is, ensure your ability to address your needs independently of whether or not the other person accepts your "no." This backup plan is your "best alternative to a negotiated agreement."
    - *Note:* "Backup" does not mean "fallback"; it is not a compromise or a less preferable agreement.
  - To come up with a viable Plan B, brainstorm a variety of plans—from "do it yourself" and "exit" strategies, to strategies that potentially involve third parties—or achieve your "no" in smaller, intermediate steps that lead to your ultimate plan.

        - Anticipate the other's power moves, understand *their* interests and consider the worst case. Remember that the other exists, the other's interests exist, and the other's power exists.
    - Respect your way to "yes."
        - Adopt a positive attitude of self-respect and respect for the other person (e.g., listen with positive attention and listen to understand, not to refute).
        - Acknowledge/recognize the other person, which does not necessarily mean to agree with the other person.
        - Ask clarifying questions.

Deliver

    - Express your "yes."
        - Affirm your "yes," your positive intention. Don't get distracted by fear and guilt.
        - Explain your "no" so that it is not mistakenly attributed to false motives.
        - Stick to the facts and avoid the blaming "you-statements," judgmental or subjective language, or categorical statements. As much as possible, use "I-statements" to describe the facts, express your feelings, and explain your interests.
        - If appropriate, also use "we-statements" to appeal to shared interests, or to invoke a common principle or accepted standard.
            - *Note:* If your "no" has nothing to do with reasons, but with a gut feeling, there is no need to invent reasons or excuses. It's fine to simply say, "I'm sorry, I just don't feel comfortable doing that."
    - Assert your "no."
        - Be assertive without being aggressive. Your "no" should be simple and straightforward. Let your "no" flow from your "yes," from your power to act in your interests, and from your respect for yourself and the other person.
        - Ways to say "no": "No thanks," "I have a personal policy," "I have other plans," "I have another commitment," "Not now," "I'd rather decline than do a poor job," etc.
        - Ways to say no to inappropriate behavior: "Stop," "No," "Enough," "Wait a minute," "That's not appropriate," "This doesn't work for me," etc.
    - Propose a "yes."
        - As you close one door, open another, this clarifies and strengthens your "no."
        - Suggest a problem-solving process, identify options for mutual gain, and lay out an outcome of mutual respect.

Follow Through

    - Stay true to your "yes."
        - Manage reactions by understanding the curve of acceptance (avoidance-denial-anxiety-anger-bargaining-sadness-acceptance) and be in control of your own reactions (e.g., pause, or "go to the balcony," before responding).
        - Don't yield, don't attack. Listen to, acknowledge, and paraphrase the other's point without conceding yours.
        - Stand firm, be true to yourself.
    - Underscore your "no."

    - Intentionally repeat your "no," be consistent and meet resistance with persistence.
    - Formulate an "anchor phrase" by boiling down your "no" to its basic essence.
    - Ask reality-testing questions; for example, "What will happen if we can't reach an agreement here?"
    - Warn (e.g., spell out your Plan B), but don't threaten.
    - Describe logical consequences that flow directly from the situation and decision at hand and, if necessary, deploy your Plan B.
- Negotiate to "yes."
    - Build a golden bridge, a way for your opponent to retreat across with dignity toward a positive solution.
    - Facilitate a wise agreement by not compromising essentials and addressing unmet interests (e.g., "Help me understand your concerns." "How does this proposal not meet your needs?").
    - Help the other person to save face and cultivate a healthy relationship (e.g., saying "no" to marriage even as you say "yes" to a future friendship).
    - End on a positive note, rebuild confidence, and replenish your goodwill account.

In summary, *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes* requires insight, foresight, courage, empathy, patience, and persistence. But Ury's approach puts the positive "no" within reach and proves its enormous rewards. The art of the positive "no" protects you and your "yes" without hurting the other. Instead of only saying "no" and potentially making another person feel rejected or attacked, the point is to simply say "yes" to what matters most to you—to create what you want, protect what you value, and change what no longer works.

Profiles in Courage, John F. Kennedy (Harper & Brothers, 1955).
Report by Alix Hopkins, 2010.

As the title of the book indicates, this was a story about courage. Courage, defined by Ernest Hemingway as "grace under pressure," is shown in eight profiles of past U.S. Senators. The individuals chosen by Kennedy were leaders during difficult times of our country's history: the fight for independence from Great Britain, the years leading up to the Civil War, and the turn of the century with a new international presence. It's interesting that none of the eight senators are depicted as overly nice or extraordinary individuals. Also, the courageous acts attributed to them usually ended up destroying their political careers. These acts did not always follow the wishes of their constituents, and their actions were not seen as courageous until years after the events. The unifying theme among the eight stories is that these men placed the needs of the country over the needs of themselves and others, and they all exhibited grace under pressure in following their conscience and belief in the greater good.

These eight leaders did things that were not always popular, and their choices were made with the realization that their decisions might alienate both their party and constituents. These leaders believed in the greater good of the company or country, even if it meant going against their personal beliefs or ideals. In addition, the knowledge that the chosen path would destroy their future aspirations did not seem to stop them. From reading this book, I learned that leadership is not pretty, neat, and easy; it's messy and hard. These leaders did things not because

they wanted people to like them but because they believed it to be the right thing to do. I also learned that being courageous can be lonely.

Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work, David Rock (Harper Collins, 2006).
Report by Joni Canterbury, 2010.

As a leader, the most effective way to improve performance is to improve thinking. *Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work* presents a new set of tools for improving people's thinking and, thus, their performance.

To take a committed action, people need to think things through for themselves; people experience a degree of inertia around thinking for themselves. The act of having an "aha" moment gives off energy, the kind of energy needed for people to become motivated and willing to take action. Our job as leaders should be to help people make their own connections. Instead, all too often, much energy goes into the old way of thinking—trying to do the thinking for others to see if our ideas stick. They rarely do. No two brains are alike. Given that everyone's internal wiring (our internal maps) is so different, a good leader harnesses this reality and brings together a balanced team of people who think in different ways. Good leaders become masters of helping others think for themselves. They help others establish a new way of thinking and new habits to be all they can be.

The First Step is to "Think about Thinking." Become passionate about the way people think and less concerned about what they think. Let people think through their own issues rather than telling them what to do; keep them focused on solutions and not the problem. Find ways to stretch and challenge their thinking, to keep them focused on the positive, and to help others grow their own strengths. Problems disappear into the background as solutions develop. Positive feedback has an impact on performance. Quiet leaders accentuate the positive and let people handle the negative on their own. Quiet leaders transform performance by providing continuous positive feedback and by providing clear objectives and expectations to focus on.

The Second Step is to "Listen for Potential." Quiet leaders listen to others as successful, competent people, able to resolve their own dilemmas. They encourage and support others just by how they listen. The first step to seeing positive change in others is to expect it.

The Third Step is to "Speak with Intent." Quiet leaders are succinct, specific, and generous when they speak. To create real change in others, a leader must capture and keep the attention of others, be clear and concise about what is said, include everything that is relevant in a dialogue, and exclude the irrelevant. People should be able to make their own mental picture of what quiet leaders are saying, and they should be clear on the meaning. Being generous is about speaking so that the other person relates to what is being said, using words they will connect with and focusing on their needs in the conversation. It's all about being personal and being real.

The Fourth Step is "Dance Toward Insight." This step illustrates how to have conversations that help others gain insight and enables them to take action. Quiet leaders dance toward insight by getting permission for harder conversations (i.e., make people feel safe and respected), and by placing people so they know where you are coming from, using thinking questions (i.e., create new maps in people's minds) so that others do their own thinking and clarification of their responses (voice what's been said). The Dance of Insight Model explains how to make these "aha" moments happen. Quiet leaders don't focus on the problem or the details or tell people how to think, they get people to notice their own thinking and take action.

These actions save time and create energy. People get motivated by their own "aha" moment, and then a quiet leader helps them stay on track as an "invisible dance partner."

Step Five is about learning to "Create New Thinking." When you want to improve someone's thinking, the best place to start is at the current reality. Having others reflect on their own thinking without value judgments allows them to generate insights (e.g., asking lots of open questions, listening, defining priorities). Once they have had insight(s), a quiet leader helps them explore alternatives to move their insight(s) into action. The Create Model in a conversation helps to get people thinking and to move their thoughts into actions and then their actions into habits they'll maintain long-term.

If our goal as leaders is to improve performance, abundant feedback is essential. Without feedback, we can't learn. It must be done in a positive and supportive way. **In Step Six, "Follow Up,"** we learn that to make new thinking a part of our everyday lives requires attention and positive feedback. Therefore, the final step to transforming performance is to make sure we follow up on the insights and actions of others to help them recognize and further embed the habits they are developing. A quiet leader focuses on the facts (status of actions, good or bad) and people's feelings; a quiet leader encourages and listens for what's been learned, looks for implications, and then helps others look for the next goal to focus on.

The old way of telling people what to do was embedded in our culture and in our past. The new way of a quiet leader is to artfully build on people's strengths by improving their thinking. Great concepts!

Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest, Peter Block (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993).
Report by Kathy Brown, 2010.

In *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest,* Peter Block calls for a whole new way of thinking about the workplace and what being a leader means. The book centers on the need for leaders to practice stewardship over the old leadership model of control and privilege. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance and it means giving people at the bottom and periphery of the organization choice and privilege. In addition to the concept of stewardship, Block focuses on the need for leaders to commit to service over self-interest. Service can only occur when there is a balance of power, when people are able to define their purpose and act on their choices, and there is an equitable distribution of rewards.

Block believes that although the notion of service and stewardship reflects some of our intentions about how to govern (lead), they are not the basis of how we currently run our organizations. Block's goal for the book is to provide a guide/map that allows leaders to explore and experience partnership, empowerment, and service. He tries to provide a viewpoint for everyone, from core workers and staff to managers and executives. The book focuses not on the individual, but the organization.

Stewardship is divided into three parts. Part I is about the basic concept, the promise of stewardship, and the limitations of leadership. Part II tries to bring in the practical and describe what this new leadership style looks like and discusses what leaders can do differently tomorrow. Part III provides details about how to get there—a logical sequence for thinking about reforming the process.

Block lists nine principals for governing on the basis of stewardship. The nine principals emphasize that attention to both the journey and destination is necessary for changing the

process. He then provides specific actions and ideas on how to change common practices of an organization that are hindering an environment of stewardship and promoting an environment of patriarchy. Finally, Block provides a stewardship strategy for political reform, which is necessary to change how organizations work.

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie (Gallup Press, 2008).
Report by Lori Kennedy, 2010.

Strengths Based Leadership is the follow-up to *Strengths Finder 2.0* which focused on individual strengths and personal effectiveness. Essentially, based on findings from thirty years of Gallup research, Rath and Conchie present the idea that focusing on our given strengths will result in more successful leadership:

- The most effective leaders are always investing in their strengths.
- The most effective leaders surround themselves with the right people and then maximize their team.
- The most effective leaders understand their follower's needs.

In this book, Rath and Conchie contend that leaders must know their strengths and the strengths of their teams. They challenge our society, which tends to point out our weaknesses and focuses time and energy "correcting" those areas of weakness rather than spending that same time and energy becoming more proficient and effective in those areas where one naturally succeeds. "If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything. While our society encourages us to be well-rounded, this approach inadvertently breeds mediocrity. Perhaps the greatest misconception of all is that of the well-rounded leader."

Instead of focusing on our weaknesses, the authors urge leaders to focus on their strengths and surround themselves with people who possess strengths in the areas in which the leader has weaknesses. The authors stress self-awareness: know who you are and who you are not. "A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths—and can call on the right strength at the right time. This explains why there is no definitive list of characteristics that describes all leaders."

The material in the book is based on four domains of leadership strength:

- Executing: leaders who know how to make things happen.
- Influencing: leaders who help their teams reach a much broader audience.
- Relationship building: leaders who are the glue that holds the team together.
- Strategic thinking: leaders who keep us focused on what could be.

Ultimately, the book is about engaging your team and propelling yourself, as a leader, by learning more about your strengths and how to utilize them. As a RIHEL fellow, I would add that capitalizing on our strengths will make us stronger leaders; however, I do think that there are areas we can all improve upon and that shouldn't be lost.

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie (Gallup Press, 2008).
Report by Jennifer Kovarik, 2010.

In *Strengths Based Leadership*, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie translate their extensive experience with Gallup research into criteria for making an exceptional leader and a great team.

Decades of data are distilled down to three key elements:

- Know your strengths and invest in others' strengths.
- Get people with the right strengths on your team.
- Understand and meet the four basic needs of those who look to you for leadership.

"Know thyself," the Greek proverb, is an important component of the first section of this book. The authors argue that there is no single set of traits that defines a leader; rather, they say that a great leader knows his/her own strengths and calls on the right strength at the right time. Being aware of one's strengths and having opportunities to utilize them is linked to better long-term health outcomes, better income, and higher job satisfaction, which increase over time in what the authors call "cumulative advantage." They suggest that if organizations empower employees to find their strengths as early as possible and capitalize on this cumulative advantage, then the organizations will see a similar advantage and grow more quickly.

A review of Gallup data found that great leadership teams had diverse strengths, which the authors divide into four domains: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. To have a strong team, leaders need to know what they have and what they are missing; candid assessment is critical. A comparison of strong teams gave some interesting insights:

- Strong teams are magnets for talent.
- Strong teams value diversity.
- Members of strong teams are equally committed to their work and personal lives.

Perhaps my favorite quote from this book is, "you are a leader only if others follow." After over 10,000 interviews with "followers," four basic needs emerged: trust, compassion, stability, and hope. When the basic needs are met, employees are engaged, efficient, and enthusiastic about the future.

Though there are some broad generalizations about leadership in the book, the authors attempt to connect readers with more tailored resources. Purchase of the book includes an access code for StrengthsFinders. Also, more than half of the actual book is "additional resources" based on the results of a StrengthsFinder assessment, including tips for leveraging the strengths.

The Taboos of Leadership: 10 Secrets No One Will Tell You About Leaders and What They Really Think, Anthony F. Smith and Steven M. Bornstein (Jossey-Bass, 2007).
Report by Dee Colombini, 2010.

In *The Taboos of Leadership*, Smith and Bornstein present the ten taboos, or secrets, of leadership. The book is a short and easy read. The title suggests that this book will reveal the ten secrets no one will tell you about leaders. However, the book proposes more questions than answers. Although the authors are researchers and experts in the field of leadership, the

perspective of the book is opinion-based rather than research-based. It focuses on the CEO's of large corporations, a somewhat narrow view of leadership.

The book is divided into four sections:

Part One: Introducing the Taboos

- *Secret 1: We Know What Leadership Looks Like (But We Don't Know What It Takes).* Leadership involves personal sacrifice. Not everyone is willing to pay the price to be a leader.

Part Two: Taboos of Persuasion

A leader must influence others. To do so, one must have credibility. Credibility is based on the Six C's: Conviction, Character, Care, Courage, Composure, and Competence.

- *Secret 2: Charisma Shouldn't Make a Difference (But It Does).* Although not all leaders possess charisma, charisma can be powerful and effective in persuading others to follow. Smith developed a Multifactor Leadership Model that describes six different leadership roles to include: Facilitator, Teacher, Pragmatist, Motivator, Visionary, and Mystic (magnetism).
- *Secret 3: Real Leaders Don't Play Politics (They Take It Very Seriously).* Like it or not, relationships are important. Understanding the political climate and having the right contacts can help one advance within an organization.
- *Secret 4: Women Make Better Leaders (When That's What They Really Want to Do).* Women make better leaders yet they are still under-represented in top leadership positions. How can this be explained? Women possess more emotional intelligence yet some say they possess less drive. Are women as driven as men? Are they willing to make the same sacrifices? Smith recommends that organizations openly discuss gender roles.

Part Three: Taboos of Position

- *Secret 5: The Double Standard Is for Cavemen (and the Corner Office).* Executives get more perks than other employees perhaps because they deserve it.
- *Secret 6: Thou Shalt Not Play Favorites with Friends and Family (Except When It Makes a Lot of Sense).* Leaders do play favorites. They need people that they can rely on and trust to "generate authentic discussion." Mentoring is simply a form of "organized favoritism."
- *Secret 7: A Leader's Fundamental Duty Is to Groom a Successor (But It Hurts Like Hell).* Leaders are expected to choose a successor. Smith compares this to planning for your death or choosing a replacement for your spouse. So much time and energy is dedicated to the job. Power and identity are tied to the leadership role. It is very difficult for leaders to let go.

Part Four: Taboos of the Person

- *Secret 8: Leaders Need to Demonstrate Work-Life Balance (No Problem: Work is Their Life).* Leaders have been criticized for creating an unhealthy standard by working too much and leaving no time for their personal life. "But all the leader wants to do is work." Work *is* their life. If the person is healthy and happy, then it is not an issue. "It only becomes an issue when expectations (for others) are not clear."

- *Secret 9: Blatant Self-Interest is Dangerous (In followers, Not Leaders).* There is a new focus on the triple bottom line (profit, societal impact, environmental impact). Smith says that this is a "smoke screen." The fact remains, "leadership is rooted in the urges of blatant self-interest."
- *Secret 10: It's Lonely at the Top (But Leaders Wouldn't Have it Any Other Way).* Leaders are public figures and at times are highly scrutinized. "There are very few people that leaders can turn to for understanding." It is lonely at the top.

The book closes with the final chapter "Our Secrets Exposed, So Now What?" in which Smith summarizes that "one of the goals of this book is to shrink the territory of leadership taboos so that leaders and followers can be more open and candid about what it really takes to lead-in a sense, to enlarge the public area." To conclude, if taboos are undermining an organization, the taboos should be openly discussed and addressed.

The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, 2006).
Report by Candace Vonderwahl, 2010.

I found this book to be interesting and real, and the suggestions are doable. Not only does Maxwell discuss the myths and challenges to leadership but also he does a fantastic job of pointing out what and how to overcome those challenges and myths. Maxwell realizes how difficult and frustrating it can be to work in the middle of an organization and strive to be a mid-level leader. In addition to the discussion of myths and challenges, Maxwell discusses the principles of his 360-Degree Leader: Lead Up, Lead Across, and Lead Down.

The Myths of Leadership From the Middle of an Organization:

- The Position Myth
- The Destination Myth
- The Influence Myth
- The Inexperience Myth
- The Freedom Myth
- The Potential Myth
- The All-or- Nothing Myth

Maxwell makes it clear that an effective leader leads on virtually every level. It is important to be conscientious of your boss, your boss's peers, your peers, your subordinates, their peers, etc. It is important to influence not only your subordinates, but as many individuals as possible within an organization. Learn the skills of leaders that lead up, across, and down. Effective leaders do not have huge egos—they show respect and exude confidence. Effective leaders are forever challenged. Once you become a leader, the job is far from over.

The many challenges that a leader faces:

- The Tension Challenge
- The Frustration Challenges
- The Multi-Hat Challenges
- The Ego Challenge

- The Fulfillment Challenge
- The Vision Challenge
- The Influence Challenge

The challenges section of the book covered a variety of ways to effectively address these challenges, but what really stood out for me within the section was the **Influence Challenge** and its meaning:

- **I**ntegrity: Build relationships on trust.
- **N**urturing: Care about people as individuals.
- **F**aith: Believe in people.
- **L**istening: Value what others have to say.
- **U**nderstanding: See from other's point of view.
- **E**nlarging: Help others become bigger.
- **N**avigating: Assist others through difficulties.
- **C**onnecting: Initiate positive relationships.
- **E**mpowering: Give others the power to lead.

This section to me was poignant. I so often see attempted leadership roles assumed without many of the above qualities in the leader. It was refreshing to see that one word could accomplish so much if we just pay attention and remind ourselves what influence really means in the leadership role.

I found the Lead Up, Lead Down, and Lead Across principles section to be simple, clear, and concise.

In order to Lead Up you must master the following principles:

- Lead yourself.
- Lighten your leader's load.
- Be willing to do what others won't.
- Do more than manage—lead!
- Invest in relational chemistry.
- Be prepared every time you take your leader's time.
- Know when to push and when to back off.
- Become a go-to player.
- Be better tomorrow than you are today.

To Lead Across, you must:

- Care
- Learn
- Appreciate
- Contribute
- Verbalize
- Lead
- Succeed

In order to accomplish these things you must be willing to apply these principles:

- Understand, practice, and complete the leadership loop.
- Put complementing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them.
- Be a friend.

- Avoid office politics.
- Expand your circle of acquaintances.
- Let the best idea win.
- Don't pretend you're perfect.

Lead Down Principles:

- Walk through the halls.
- See everyone as a "10."
- Develop each team member as a person.
- Place people in their strength zones.
- Model the behavior you desire.
- Transfer the vision.
- Reward for results.

Value of the 360-Degree Leader(s):

- A leadership team is more effective than just one leader.
- Leaders are needed at every level of an organization.
- Leading successfully at one level is a qualifier for leading at the next level.
- Good leaders in the middle make better leaders at the top.
- 360-degree leaders possess qualities every organizations needs.

Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders, Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli (Harvard Business School Press, 2007).
Report by Cassidy Smith, 2010.

Through the Labyrinth asserts that women are excluded from leadership positions more frequently than men and that the processes underlying this result are varied and not necessarily as obvious as they were in the past. For most of human history, barriers to women's leadership consisted of explicit rules and clear-cut norms. The exclusion of women from leadership roles began to change in the 1970s and barriers shifted so that they no longer excluded women from all positions of authority—only those at the higher levels. The "glass ceiling" metaphor emerged in the late 80s and described the less obvious manner in which women were excluded from high-level leadership roles. The image of a "glass" obstruction suggested that women were being misled about their opportunities because the impediment was not so easy to see from a distance. Eagly and Carli contend that the glass ceiling metaphor now falls short and that today the barriers for women are more akin to a labyrinth that contains numerous barriers, some subtle and others quite obvious.

Seven Reasons the Glass Ceiling Metaphor is Misleading

- It erroneously implies that women have equal access to entry-level positions.
- It erroneously assumes the presence of an absolute barrier at a specific high level in organizations.
- It erroneously suggests that all barriers to women are difficult to detect and therefore unforeseen.
- It erroneously assumes that there exists a single, homogeneous barrier and thereby ignores the complexity and variety of obstacles that women leaders can face.
- It fails to recognize the diverse strategies that women devise to become leaders.
- It precludes the possibility that women can overcome barriers and become leaders.

- It fails to suggest that thoughtful problem solving can facilitate women's paths to leadership.

The first few chapters of the book explore such questions as, Where are the women leaders? Are men natural leaders? Do family responsibilities hold women back? Is discrimination still a problem? Do people resist women's leadership? Do women lead differently than men? Do organizations compromise women's leadership? The authors analyze research from psychology, economics, sociology, and management and provide examples from case studies, media, and personal accounts to come to conclusions about real world obstacles for women. Some of the key findings from their analysis are:

- Women have made substantial progress but still have quite far to go to achieve equal representation as leaders. In the U.S., women now occupy more than 40 percent of all managerial positions and hold nearly one-fourth of chief executive positions. Men still have more authority and higher wages, but women are catching up.
- Assertions that men and women have different personalities have been traditional ground for denying leadership roles to women. Research shows successful leaders have an androgynous balance of traits that includes gregariousness, positive initiative and assertion, social skills, intelligence, conscientiousness, integrity, trustworthiness, and the ability to persuade, motivate, and inspire others.
- Increasing the number of women who can successfully have children and maintain employment depends on men becoming more involved in the domestic sphere.
- Evidence supports that discrimination contributes to men's advantages in wages and promotion.
- Women leaders often experience the "double bind" of needing to appear both assertive and nice. This is especially intense for women in traditionally male roles or higher-level positions.
- On average, women more than man, have a democratic, participative, collaborative leadership style. Women in more male-dominated roles tend to lead more like men.
- Many organizations reflect the traditional family division of labor. The extremely long hours on the job that are normative for many managers and professionals conflict with women's domestic responsibilities (and sometimes those of men). Organizations often embody a masculine culture that can hinder women from accumulating social capital they need to advance as leaders.

Although I am frustrated by the authors' assumption that most women live in dual income households with a male partner, this book nicely outlines some of the major challenges for women who want to advance their careers. I am especially struck by their comment that successful women leaders forgo or delay childbearing because I have also experienced comments from employers such as, "I'm glad you don't have little ones at home, so you can work more hours," and "you better not go and get pregnant on us." I am intrigued by their discussion of the importance of social networking for leadership development and that men are often able to dedicate more time to social networking than women due to fewer domestic obligations.

This book is more of an academic examination of the challenges for women leaders, but it also offers some suggestions for women. The authors point out that most advice books for

women leaders encourage them to act either more masculine or feminine, to never cry or show weakness or embrace one's mothering instinct. Instead, the authors suggest women not wait to seek leadership until organizational and cultural changes have created a level playing field and to embrace qualities that are typically uncommon for women, such as taking credit for accomplishments, negotiating salaries, and feeling authentic in leader roles.

Toy Box Leadership: Leadership Lessons from the Toys You Loved as a Child, Ron Hunter, Jr. and Michael E. Waddell (Thomas Nelson, 2008).
Report by Julie Weissbuch, 2010.

Toy Box Leadership is a creative and fun way for us to look at leadership. It takes concepts that every leader should know and equates them with toys we love. This book made me smile in places and also gave me some history on the toys.

In all honesty, this book is what I would consider to be a beginner or intermediate book on leadership. The concepts are sound and the explanation of the concepts is thorough. What the book doesn't do is instruct you on how to implement the concepts. It gives you a basic overview of what to do as a leader but lacks the steps to make take the concepts from theory to reality.

I will also say that I did enjoy this book and it is a fairly quick read. It is a great book for motivation and that quick push that we need at times. It is also a good, quick reminder of some of the things good leaders do. Every time I come in contact with the toys mentioned in the book, I will be reminded of the leadership lesson that came from it.

Highlights:

- LEGO Bricks: Relationships—Building Begins with Connecting
  - LEGO Leaders Recognize Connectional Value
  - LEGO Leaders Recognize Connectional Ability
  - LEGO Leaders Recognize Connectional Failures
- Slinky Dog: Vision—Pull, Then Be Patient
  - The Process of Pulling
  - Problems with the Pull
  - Pull, and Then Be Patient
- Play-Doh: Mentoring—The Mold Makes the Man
  - Play-Doh People
  - Play-Doh Principles
  - Play-Doh People Are Shaped by Molds
  - Play-Doh People Are Shaped When They Are Fresh
  - Play-Doh Problems
- Yo-Yo: Creativity—It Only Happens when You Let Go
  - The Purpose-Driven Yo-Yo
  - The Requirements of Creativity
  - The Killers of Creativity
- Mr. Potato Head: Communication—The Right Face for the Right Place
  - The Right Face
  - The Eight Faces Every Leader Must Pack
  - The Right Place: Matching the Face with the Place
- Rubik's Cube: Ethics—Making the Right Turn

    - Cubism #1: Ethical Parallels in the Solution of the Cube
    - Cubism #2: Ethical Erosion in a Mixed-Up Cube
    - Ethical Distinctives in a Multicolored Cube
- Rocking Horse: Efficiency—All Show and No Go
    - Four Types of Inefficient "Rocking Horses"
    - Rocking Horse Riders
    - Giving Your Horse Legs
- Little Green Army Men: Strategy—Success Is in the Setup
    - The Checkpoint of Involvement
    - The Checkpoint of Assessment
    - The Checkpoint of Placement
    - The Checkpoint of Development
    - The Checkpoint of Refinement
- Lite-Brite: Message: Illuminate to Communicate
    - The First Element: Let There Be Lite!
    - The Second Element: A Filter Is Worth a Thousand Words
    - The Third Element: Peg Your Point
    - The Outside Element: Influencing Your Audience
    - Making Things With Light
- Weebles: Endurance—Staying Down Is Not an Option
    - Truth #1: Endurance Recognizes The Falling Down Is Inevitable
    - Truth #2: Endurance Requires a Center of Balance
    - Truth #3: Endurance Results from Proper Weight Distribution

For me, probably the most important chapter was on the Slinky Dog because it is relevant to me at this moment. It discusses organizational culture change; it reminded me that this takes time. The "Pull, Then Be Patient" mantra of the chapter really spoke to me. I am in the midst of projects that are very different for my organization. So now that they have let me work on new and different projects, I need to take the time for the projects to be successful and for the rest of the organization to "catch up."

Another chapter that was less relevant to what I am going through but was a good general reminder was the Mr. Potato Head Chapter. I think, in theory, we all understand that the non-verbal is such a big part of communication. This chapter reminded me of that and gave me some tools or "faces" that are quite valuable to "unpack" at specific times.

This book is a great reminder of the tools all leaders need to have. It is likely that I will go out and buy one of each of the toys and keep them on my shelf as a constant motivator to be the best leader I know how to be.

Transforming Your Leadership Culture, John B. McGuire and Gary Rhodes (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009).
Report by Fayette Augillard, 2010.

Transforming Your Leadership Culture focuses on how the role of culture, especially leadership culture, impacts organizational change and, therefore, organizational change success. The authors define leadership in terms of outcomes:

- **Direction:** Charting a course of vision for the organization—where you are going and how you are going to get there.
- **Alignment:** Relationship of beliefs and talent in the systems, structure, and processes that enable an organization to head in the direction you have set.
- **Commitment:** Getting the leadership culture and then the whole organization on board, believing in, and devoted to the direction set by your vision and strategy.

McGuire and Rhodes state that too often organizational change focuses on external systems, structures, and processes instead of human systems, which are the systems that can be the difference between succeeding and failing in an organization. In order to truly transform an organization, the change must begin with the leaders, "Change leadership beliefs and you change the culture."

The three frameworks for leadership culture transformation are:

- **Inside-out:** Your internal, intuitive, emotional, creative spirit; the source of deep, sustainable change.
- **Readiness:** Your preparedness as a leader to face the challenge of change.
- **Headroom:** Space and time created to allow systemic development of the leadership culture and developing a bigger mind.

McGuire and Rhodes also state that large-scale organizational change must first begin with you. It cannot be delegated, deferred, or demanded of others if you yourself are not willing to change. That maybe intimidating, but from their experience organizational change that takes on and follows through on the process of cultural transformation in support of other large changes consistently succeeds in terms of larger performance goals, while other organizations generally fail to change and struggle to survive.

Lastly, McGuire and Rhodes focus on the three types of cultures in organizations:

- **Dependent-Conformer:** Authority and control are held at the top; success depends on obedience to authority and loyalty.
- **Independent-Achiever:** Distributing authority and control through the ranks; success means mastery of systems that produce results in an individual's own domain and eventually contribute to the success of the organization.
- **Interdependent-Collaborator**: Authority and control are shared based on strategic competence for the whole organization; success means collaborative mastery of integrating systems that produce results now and into the future.

The goal for any organization is to work toward the interdependent-collaborator model to have a more connected leadership capability in which everyone in the organization can share

Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor, Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman and James O'Toole (Jossey-Bass, 2008).
Report by Deryk Sanchez Standring, 2010.

In *Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor*, Bennis, Goleman, and O'Toole explore the complexity of transparency within organizations. Transparency is a vital component of healthy, functioning teams and organizations. It is frequently used in organizational mission statements and incorporated into organizational operating procedures. However, the actual achievement of transparency is much more difficult than simply espousing its merits.

The authors stress that the foundation of transparency within an organization is the ability for an organization to support openness, regardless of a person's position within the organization. Blogs, anonymous YouTube videos, and other forms of electronic communication are shedding light on hidden organizational practices and forcing many organizations to become transparent regarding internal processes. However, the authors assert that having information become open is good, but that organizations need to strive for transparency instead of waiting for information to leak out.

To achieve openness and transparency, leaders must take the risk and be transparent in their decision making process and develop organizational practices that allow for all levels of employees to provide anonymous and open feedback. Leadership also needs to communicate the feedback that is received and what action, if any, will be taken as a result of receiving the feedback.

A challenge for leaders in receiving open and accurate information about their organizations is the power of their positions. Frequently, information is filtered, so that a leader only hears the good that is happening within the organization. The authors provided two ideas on how leaders may address the filtering. One is to openly ask staff for their dissenting ideas on organizational operations. Leaders need to be willing to listen to what follows (not become defensive) and open to change. Secondly, leaders need to begin seeking counsel at all levels within an organization and not just with their immediate peers and reports. Leaders who are willing to accept dissent and rethink operations set the stage for transparent organizations.

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998).
Report by Pamela Leetch, 2010.

For nearly forty years, Maxwell has been researching leadership styles and techniques. Along the way, he has also been a leader in many organizations and has started his own leadership development company. In *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Maxwell identifies twenty-one "laws" that he believes every leader must work toward following in order to be a successful leader. Although no one can be a master at all twenty-one laws, Maxwell believes it is necessary to have these principles as a foundation and to continue practicing and applying them if a leader is to become successful. At the end of each chapter, there are suggestions for how to apply each law to one's current life. In addition, at the end of the book, there is a self-evaluation to determine how effective a leader you currently are.

The Law of the Lid states that leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness. If a person is only capable of leading to a certain level, that is the highest the team or organization can reach without getting a new leader. Many teams have reached a plateau and are not able to move higher because of the Law of the Lid.

The **Law of Influence** is the true measure of leadership, meaning that without any influence, a leader can never expect anyone to follow. The Law of Influence does not mean that a person must have a position or a title but, rather, true influence over people who believe in them. Influence is gained by character, relationships, knowledge, intuition, experience, past success, and ability.

The Law of Process dictates that leadership is a lifelong process that must be developed daily and continually, not in single day. As in every winning team, practice is a must, and if you practice and learn leadership every day, at some point you will be recognized as leader in the public eye. "Champions don't become champions in the ring, they are merely recognized there."

Every goal needs a vision and a course to follow and the best leaders practice this by following the **Law of Navigation.** In order for an outcome to be realized, one must be willing to put a lot of time into planning and "charting the course." A leader must be able to have a balance between facts and faith, and then plan ahead using both of them.

One of the most important things a leader can do is to follow the **Law of Addition,** which says leaders add value by serving others. As a leader, one must be willing to take on the attitude of a servant and be willing to find out what other people value, and then serve their purpose by adding to their lives.

The Law of Solid Ground is based on the idea that trust is the foundation of leadership. Maxwell believes trust is THE single most important thing a leader needs to have from his followers before he can move ahead. If the leader consistently follows through and earns the trust of people around him, people will follow him. If the opposite is true, soon no one will be with him.

People will naturally follow leaders stronger than themselves and that is found in **The Law of Respect.** Leaders who would rank around an 8 will have followers who are a 6 or 7. This does create a problem because if you are a 7 as a leader, 8s, 9s, and 10s will not follow you no matter how compelling the vision.

The Law of Intuition states that leaders evaluate everything with a leadership bias. A leader views everything through a leadership lens—everything he looks at can be enhanced. This quality, which can be learned, is built into a leader and cannot be separated from the leader.

The Law of Magnetism states that who you are is who you attract; or, stated another way, birds of a feather flock together. However, if you are not impressed by the people you are attracting, follow the Law of Process and work to make yourself a better leader in order to attract the people you want to attract.

People will not follow a leader just because they are asked to. That is because a leader must touch a heart before they ask for a hand—**The Law of Connection.** People need to see that a leader cares before they will be willing to follow them on any kind of mission.

The Law of the Inner Circle states that a leader's potential is determined by those closest to him. Because everyone cannot be great at everything, leaders fill their inner circle with people who can complement their skills well; therefore, never stop improving your inner circle.

One of the hardest principles to follow is **The Law of Empowerment.** It is difficult for most leaders to be willing to give up their power to someone else. However, it is necessary to do so in order to cultivate more leaders so that teams or organizations can move forward. A leader should train his successor and be prepared to give up his position to that next leader. Leading well is not about enriching one's self, it is about empowering others.

The premise of **The Law of the Picture** is the old saying, "do as I say, not as I do." People will follow someone who has character and who is willing to do what they are asking their followers to do.

The Law of the Buy-In states that people need to buy into the leader in order to buy into the vision. After they buy into the leader, they will follow many things a leader suggests.

One of the easiest principles for me to understand was **The Law of Victory** because it states that every leader will find a way to win, somehow or another. I think this is engrained in most leaders.

A leader will find that in the beginning of his leadership journey, people are not incredibly willing to follow him until he does something great which creates momentum. After the momentum has begun, everything he does seems easier because he already has the ball rolling. **The Law of the Big Mo** says momentum is a leader's best friend.

Of course, everyone knows priorities are needed to get things accomplished and that activity is not necessarily accomplishment; that sums up **The Law of Priorities.**

In **The Law of Sacrifice,** "a leader must give up to go up." The higher a leader climbs, the more he has to practice.

When leading is as important as what to do and where to go, is time for **The Law of Timing**. If you try to implement the right vision at the wrong time it will never work, so you must make sure to practice your timing.

The Law of Explosive Growth and **The Law of Legacy** go together, in my opinion. The Law of Explosive Growth states that you must train leaders to train leaders so you can have more leaders. The Law of Legacy states that accomplishments and character traits will live on long after the person will.

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John C. Maxwell (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998). Report by Curtis Taipale, 2010.

John C. Maxwell is nationally regarded as a top expert on leadership and speaks to hundreds of thousands of people each year. He is the author of over thirty books and he has taught his leadership principles to Fortune 500 companies and sports organizations.

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership provides a quick distillation of leadership knowledge and experience Maxwell has acquired over a thirty-year span. These twenty-one laws govern both one's personal and organizational effectiveness and can be learned by anyone. Apply these laws and people will want to follow you. Alternately, if you violate or ignore these laws, you will not be able to lead others.

The Law of the Lid: Leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness. Basically, maximum effectiveness is achieved when dedication to success is combined with leadership ability. The higher you want to climb, the more you need leadership.

The Law of Influence: The true measure of leadership is influence. True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned. It comes only from influence and that can't be mandated. It must be earned.

The Law of Process: Leadership develops daily, not in a day. Becoming a leader is a lot like investing successfully in the stock market. If your hope is to make a fortune in a day, you're not going to be successful. The four phases of leadership growth are (1) not knowing what you don't know, (2) knowing what you don't know, (3) growing and knowing, and it starts to show, and (4) your ability to lead becomes almost automatic.

The Law of Navigation: Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course. The secret to the Law of Navigation is preparation.

The Law of E.F. Hutton: When the real leader speaks, people listen. A real leader holds the power, not just the position. As an example, if you see a disparity between who is leading a meeting and who is leading the people, the person running the meeting isn't the real leader.

The Law of Solid Ground: Trust is the foundation of leadership. To build trust, a leader must exemplify competence, connection, and character. Character makes trust possible and trust makes leadership possible.

The Law of Respect: People naturally follow leaders stronger than themselves. When people respect someone as a person, they admire that person. When they respect someone as a friend, they love that person. When they respect a person as a leader, they follow that person. Leaders earn respect by making sound decisions, admitting their mistakes, and putting what's best for their followers and the organization ahead of their personal agendas.

The Law of Intuition: Leaders evaluate everything with a leader bias. The Law of Intuition is probably the most difficult to understand because it depends on much more than facts. It is based on facts plus instinct and other intangible factors. A leader has to read the situation and know instinctively what play to call. Natural ability and learned skills create an informed intuition that makes leadership issues jump out at leaders.

The Law of Magnetism: Who you are is who you attract. Positive leaders attract positive people. If you think your people are negative, then you better check your attitude.

The Law of Connection: Leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. The heart comes before the head. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

The Law of the Inner Circle: A leader's potential is determined by those closest to him. Hire the best staff you can find, develop them as much as you can, and hand off everything you possibly can to them.

The Law of Empowerment: Only secure leaders give power to others. "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it." (Theodore Roosevelt)

The remaining nine laws I will leave for others to discover by reading this informative book. It is a fast read and you will find many fascinating stories about successful businesses that you probably use every day.

Unbowed: A Memoir, Wangari Maathai (Anchor, 2007).
The Greenbelt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience, Wangari Maathai (Lantern, 2006).
Report by Greta Klingler, 2010.

Wangari Maathai is the founder of the Green Belt Movement and winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. These two books are an account of her struggles and successes as a leader for social and environmental justice. What was most interesting to me about these books in relation to leadership was that Maathai analyzes the leadership principles that contributed most to her success and reflects on the leadership styles that contributed to the corruption and oppression that led to the injustices that she is working to eliminate.

Maathai chronicles her life through her personal, educational, and work experiences while growing up in post-colonial Kenya, while seeking higher education in Germany and

United States, and through relationships with numerous international organizations. Out of each of these experiences she was able to gain the confidence and the leadership skills to mobilize a grassroots movement to reforest Kenya as a means to provide food and fuel security, reverse soil erosion and desertification, and ultimately to reclaim democracy for the people.

According to Maathai, the most important characteristics of a leader include:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Honesty
- Forward vision

In addition to the characteristics listed above, a leader must also be able to:

- Create self-efficacy among the team s/he is leading.
- Create a meaningful context for the issue, problem, or task being addressed.
- Keep things simple and relevant.
- Capitalize on the existing roles of team members.
- Create a set of common values.
- Motivate and inspire action.

Perhaps the most compelling piece of wisdom that Maathai shares in these books is the idea that a leader must create an environment that fosters leadership in others. If a leader fails to do this, their cause is destined to fail because there is no sustainability. This is an overarching theme in both her work and these books. It is this principle that highlights the difference between Maathai's type of leadership and the kind of leadership that pervades among oppressed communities. If I had to sum up the Wangari Maathai's foundation of leadership it would be that to lead is to empower.