



The Leader Within: Learning Enough About Yourself to Lead Others

By Drea Zigarmi, Ken Blanchard, Michael O'Connor, Carl Edeburn

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The first step towards becoming an outstanding leader: know yourself. This book will help you understand yourself as a leader... so you can change, grow, and become powerfully more effective. Authored by four world-renowned leadership experts, including the legendary Ken Blanchard, it draws on an extraordinary seven-year research study on how successful corporate executives exert influence. The authors begin by presenting self-change as your most urgent leadership challenge, and showing how your values and personality govern your actions, even when you don't realize it. You'll examine the inner self you're currently bringing to your "moments of influence," discovering how your disposition, values, beliefs, and persona are contributing right now to your success -- or failure. Throughout, the authors present proven, values-based approaches to leadership in both group settings and one-to-one contexts.

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Preface

The Book's Origin

The Leader Within is the result of our many years of experience training, consulting, coaching, and researching American business managers and leaders. At the heart of this book is a seven-year, in-depth, statistical study of the influence behaviors used by American corporate executives. Although the report's statistics are not included (to reduce reading time and save space), the conclusions presented in this book are sound and substantiated.

The Book's Purpose

This book is a self-development resource; its purpose is to help you learn more about yourself so that you can change, grow, and become a better leader. Its primary objective is to present some well-developed models that help you re-create or reinvent your leadership approach so that you can bring about better organizational results and greater human satisfaction.

Knowing yourself is key to being an effective leader. The models explained in this book can help you examine the inner self that you bring to your organizational life's frequent "moments of influence." Examining how you presently behave as a leader, and then contrasting and comparing those behaviors with possible alternatives, can provide you with invaluable insights for becoming a more effective leader.

The Book's Intended Audience

We wrote this book for managers and leaders--people who earn a living by influencing others within organizational settings. However, other audiences will also find it informative and helpful. Consultants can utilize the information within this book to better understand the executives they coach. Human resource professionals can use this book as a tool for broadening and refining their executive development programs. College and university faculty can use this book as a challenging and stimulating text for their own leadership teaching or research, and the research formulated by the students they advise.

The Authors' Frame of Reference

The working definition of leadership used in this book is, of course, values based, as is any definition of worth. We define a leader as anyone who acts to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of the follower--within an environment of conflict, competition, or change--that results in the follower taking action toward a mutually shared outcome or vision.

As you will see, that vision must be growthful for the follower, ultimately societal, and also contribute to the well-being of all involved. The values inherent in this definition involve the follower's growth and development; they imply the follower's eventual independence and autonomy of action when serving the (organizational) outcome or vision.

The term servant leader might come to mind. The leader who is a servant judges his or her success not only in the accomplishment of the outcome, but also by the effects the accomplishment has on those who do the accomplishing. Are those who are led healthier, happier, committed, and more apt to become leaders themselves? The true intent of the servant leader is to serve both the vision and all those who seek to achieve that vision. The servant leader's inner intent is not self-oriented, but other-oriented. Such a leader ensures that other people's high-priority needs are being served.¹

The Book's Organization

The book is organized into seven chapters, which move from a discussion of an individual's inner makeup or personality dimensions, to the role of a leader, to the implications inner personality has on an individual's potential to carry out the leader role. Each chapter is divided into two sections that help organize the seven key chapters.

- Chapter 1 discusses the leadership challenge of self-change.
- Chapter 2 defines the parameters of personality and leadership.
- Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present in-depth discussions and models for understanding the three key aspects of personality: disposition, values, and persona.
- Chapter 6 discusses leader behaviors in a one-to-one context.
- Chapter 7 makes the important connection among disposition, values, and leadership behaviors. This chapter examines the relationship between personality and leadership behaviors that may help you become a more effective leader.

The Authors' Hopes

We wrote this book with the hope that increased self-awareness would result in better leadership and fewer negative personalities in organizations. We hope for less ego, politics, personal hurt, and psychological turn off on the part of all people in organizations; and we hope for more organizational go, action, personal joy, and liberation of personal energy and motivation for organizational purpose. Our dream of healthier organizations will happen more readily if leaders become more self-aware and elicit more self-awareness from their followers.

Discovering who you are and what you can be is a lifelong challenge. Connecting to the "lost" or as yet undiscovered facets of your humanness will make you a better leader and will go far to rekindle the spirit of the people you lead.

D.Z., K.B., M.O., C.E.

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Endnotes

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