

“Leadership is Dead”

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Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

Sadly, Paul’s fierce devotion to self-preservation and winning the game left him walled off from anyone who could have helped him.

After decades of greed by corporate tycoons, financial moguls, and political egos, this generation is searching for authentic, selfless leadership that holds a mission higher than and outside of themselves.

Looking back, I could confidently say that I was addicted to accomplishment and the approval those accomplishments brought from others. This style of leadership could run roughshod over people who couldn’t keep up with me. I’d been liberated from a self-centered leadership style into a broader view of influence. Influence is the most potent and underutilized professional resource on the planet. It is influence that makes true leadership come to life.

We become so guarded, so focused on protecting our ideas, our status, and our reputations, that we always play it safe, avoid risk, and never reach out beyond our most trusted and loyal circle.

I realized that positive leadership occurs not by “leading” others but rather by influencing them.

Great leaders are always needed, now more than ever, but today’s executives must understand the roots of influence and the benevolent use of power if they hope to exert a positive impact on their work forces.

Collin leads one of the most successful Ford dealerships in America: Sewell Ford, in Odessa, Texas. After spending a day with his team, I was overwhelmed by the empowering culture that Collin had developed.

Every employee I spoke with had a well-defined role that he or she understood in depth.

We live in a society that is too often enamored of celebrity, outward appearance, and material wealth. In such an environment, the temptation is to emphasize perception over reality, style over substance, words over actions. Most respected and even revered leaders attract followers because of who they are, what they stand for, and how they relate to and influence others. They rarely resort to coercion or intimidation.

You may be brilliant and full of great ideas, but you can lead only if others are willing to follow you.

We’ve become so focused on the processes of leadership, however, that we’ve neglected the hearts and souls of our leaders. Raising your capacity for influence should be the cornerstone of your leadership development. Once you are confident in who you are and what you believe in, you can more effectively communicate strategies. My career is devoted to helping leaders perform at peak levels to have a positive impact.

It is nearly impossible to trust someone who thinks first and foremost about himself. And the less people trust you, the less influence you will have with them. To have true influence, you can’t simply focus on yourself and your needs

It may be helpful to share a list of attributes that I have accumulated over the years that define a true influence leader.

He or she:

- Leads with vision;
- Leads from the head and the heart;

- Practices humility and service to others (lets go of status and self-preservation);
- Influences rather than pushes or demands;
- Invests in the success of others first;
- Rises above unethical practices, pressure, and petty politics;
- Attracts a diverse and dedicated team of future leaders;
- Delivers more than expected (loaves and fishes);
- Wields the tools of forgiveness, gratitude, and laughter;
- Reaches out to make the last first.

Leadership is influence. Influence is power. How that power is used comes from the intent of the leader, from the motives of the heart. The first stage of influence is to trust others. It is both the foundation for growth and the bedrock for impact. Without trust there is no influence.

We don't simply need more leaders, we need dynamic, positive, world-changing leaders—true influencers. These are the leaders who can awaken leadership again in this country and throughout our world.

Prohibited is when someone else tells you that you can't do something. Inhibited is when you tell yourself that you can't do something. Leadership is influence. Influence is power. In wielding that power, a leader can choose to use it in one of two ways: To empower and liberate or To overpower and dominate

To overpower is to subdue or control someone through manipulation or coercion. It is typically done for the benefit of the person in control. Overpowering normally leads to limiting productivity, as people either become enslaved or unable to fully deploy their skills. They will, many times, work in fear of the response from the overpowering leader. Overpowering leadership suppresses people and prevents them from performing with enthusiasm and creativity. Fear may motivate people for a time, but ultimately it is destructive and self-defeating.

The typical goal of the Dominator is the pursuit of control, money, fame, and the status that comes with power. Dictatorial rule is the tool of lazy leaders. It is easier for them to overpower than to empower.

To empower is to enable someone else to accomplish something. It is a transfer of authority. Giving orders and directions is not empowerment. Rather, an empowering leader trains, mentors, and apprentices someone to help him or her grow. I find that some of our clients confuse the essential act of building relationships with the less essential practice of socializing at work.

To have true influence, you must embrace a lifestyle of giving for the benefit of others . . . It is an active choice that must be made daily. And it is a core leadership principle.

Would those you lead say that you know them?

- What can you do to know them better?
- What is your style of influence?
- How do others want you to lead?
- Have you considered being more innovative in your routines or your methods for communicating?
- How well do you really know the culture of your organization?
- Are you open to knowing it better?
- What is the style of your organization?
- Who is the best influencer in your organization today?
- What does that person do well?
- How should you change what you do?
- If you had to label the different customer types, how would you describe them? Create a term for each.
- How well do they want to be known?
- What could you do to make a customer's world better?
- Get your team involved. How could the organization positively influence your customers?
- What could you do within the community to be a true influence company?