

Book Review **“Unleashing Leadership”**

Aligning what people do best with what organizations need most.

By John Hoover & Angelo Valenti
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Reviewer: Mrs. Swetha N. Harsha.
Lecturer, SRN Adarsh College

No executive has ever suffered because his subordinates were strong and effective.

Peter.F. Drucker

In any context, leading is about other people. When it comes to our relationship with other people, our success or failure will ultimately come down to issues of character and our essential natures. The old leadership school taught that an organization is made up of officers and enlistees, the more powerful and the less powerful, superiors and subordinates.

John Hoover, Ph.D., has successfully used the leadership techniques in this book as an entrepreneur and an executive with Walt Disney Productions and McGraw-Hill. He has helped dozens of clients, including Delta Air Lines, IBM, Motorola and Xerox.

Angelo Valenti, Ph.D., is Chairman of the Psychology Department at Oklahoma City University, a public speaker, a published author and active in many civic and professional organizations including the American Psychological Association.

This book contains 286 pages which is divided into four parts: Culture and Leadership, Alignment Tool Kit, Leadership Styles, Leadership Motivations.

The book unfolds with a beautiful question being answered, “How would your organization perform if everyone accepted leadership responsibility?” Aligning what people do best with what organizations need the most beginning with determining what people do best.

Lead the way you like to be led :

We believe everyone needs to assume leadership responsibility for what he or she does, be it simple or significant. In the highest performing organizations, leadership attitudes are not only encouraged in everyone, they are no longer optional. Leadership is a circle, not a ladder. Leadership is a system. Leadership is action, not position. People are money. Valuing people is a serious business. Organization prefers it when people in positions of institutional authority make decisions with little or no input from others. Becoming a better leader means becoming a better you.

Leadership is a Specialization :

Competency is on our list of important leadership characteristics. Success in one thing does not necessarily lead to success in all things. This is true of leadership. Success with an individual endeavour, or in a specific field, does not guarantee that the successful individual will be an effective leader in that field or inspire others to similar achievement in a similar endeavour.

Alignment Tool Kit :

“What do you really know about the members of your organization? Do you know enough about your team members to make informed decisions about their abilities, tendencies, desires, and relational strengths?” These are some of the questions which need to be answered by every leader. The leadership style inventory will help you gain knowledge about yourself and how you tend to think and behave.

The myth of fearlessness

Fear is neutral. There is no such thing as a truly fearless leader. Fear occurs when individuals face the potential loss of something they consider valuable. Its the chief cause of irresponsible behaviour in for-profit and not for-profit businesses, education and government. Mastering fear through recognition of unique strengths and essential natures will set the stage for everyone in the organization to become a leader. Being upbeat, positive and helpful can draw others out of their doldrums and boost them up to a more productive level. Being too up-beat can wear people out. When leadership is made an expectation for everyone, this problem is greatly diminished and hopefully eliminated.

Relationships are everything :

The entire enterprise is built on relationships. Operating on assumptions is dangerous. The face the organization presents to the outside is extremely important. Social specialists are great assets to the organizations for which they work. The degree to which an organization embraces and encourages its social specialists will have a direct impact on the bottom line. Part of leading with an open hand is encouraging everyone in the organization.

The Stability Specialist :

Stability specialists are guardedly agreeable to sharing leadership responsibilities, if the collaboration will result in more balanced achievement of organizational objectives. Stability specialists seek the peace of the still waters, but steadily navigate through the inevitable storms and gales. They make terrific pilots because they refuse to be flustered by crisis. Quiet courage is often associated with stability specialists.

Courage and Confidence :

A core issue and primary promise of Unleashing Leadership is to help master fear by aligning individual and team composite leadership profiles with the needs of the organizations. In this way, fear no longer blocks the thoughts and actions that will help propel you and your enterprise to greater success. Identifying and rewarding courageous behaviour is a start. Courage should be selfless and sincere however much or little one possesses. Confidence is always accompanied by a positive attitude. Passion will not die out.

Courage, confidence and concentration when fuelled by passion and guided by virtuous values are an unstoppable leadership system that can stand up to any adversity, distortion or assault

Passion and Values :

Passion sustains efforts. Focused efforts leads to existence. Passion and excellence are never far apart. Commitment and enthusiasm are the two principal by-products of passion. Because nobody really knows where passion comes from or what is it made of, human hands cannot create it. Although passion cannot be created, you can search it out and identify it.

The Unspoken language :

Although values and beliefs are discussed openly and regularly in an environment of effective leadership, they also fill the air. Team members work hard alongside one another in an atmosphere of trust that is made possible in large part by the existence of a value system. Some organizations are complex systems. No matter how complex and far-flung an enterprise might be, a strong value-based culture will knit the team members together and keep them working in concert with one another, toward uniform goals, even when they don't speak to each other.

Over time, organization needs to maintain equilibrium like a marathon runner.

This book adds to the list of many books on Leadership with a crispy clear presentation which makes it stand apart.

“Truth, self control, asceticism, generosity, non-injury, constancy in virtue these are the means of success.....” Mahabharata.

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