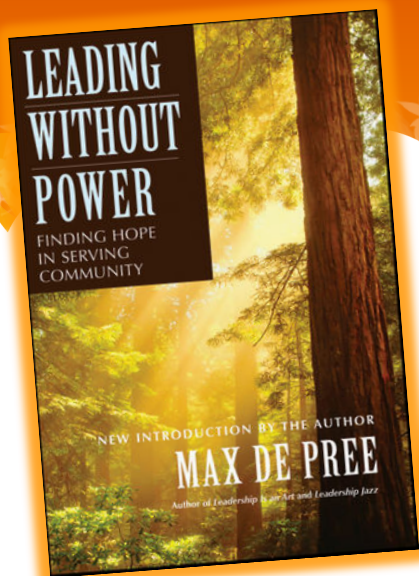


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PME803

Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community

By Max De Pree



Summary

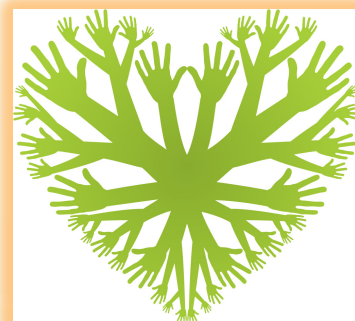
Written in chapters that resemble a collection of essays, De Pree encourages readers to engage in thoughtful consideration of what it means to commit to reaching potential within organizations. Through anecdotal evidence, reflective and analytical questions, and personal observations, De Pree shares his insights. The overall message of this book is that leaders in all organizations, for-profit and non-profit, should practice stewardship and servanthood as they focus on helping individuals realize their potential—which is more important than goal achievement, asset management or quantifiable growth.

Who is Max De Pree?

The former CEO of Herman Miller, Inc., Max De Pree has become a renowned name in the world of leadership. De Pree integrated his personal beliefs and values into his style of leadership, which helped him build a highly successful Fortune 500 company using a foundation of trust and integrity. Recognized for his ability to create a thriving work environment by focusing on genuine respect for the skills and contributions of every employee, and his efforts to serve his employees in creative and morally thoughtful ways, he was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Business Enterprise Trust in 1997 (“Our History,” n.d.).

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Author's Aim:

Max De Pree wrote *Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community*, with the hope of helping both profit and non-profit sectors recognize and learn about the value of realized potential. Recognizing that volunteers, who work as a means of fulfillment, often accomplish work in non-profit organizations De Pree offers ideas about how to harness that commitment to a common good and passion to do what is right into other contexts (De Pree, 1997).

Significant Concepts

Places of Realized Potential

Organizations that seek to become places where individuals can realize their potential are open to change. They encourage the sharing of ideas and contrary opinions. Opportunities for learning and growth, challenging work, and equitable participation are consistently present. Grace and forgiveness are freely given to those who have experienced failures or made mistakes. Relationships are also fostered and achievements are celebrated.

What's a Movement?

A movement is community of individuals who share a common goal and an understanding that the future can be created—not simply experienced. Movements require a leader that uplifts and inspires others, people who demonstrate competence in both relationships and technical skills, and a sense of creativity.

The Language of Potential

Through body language, intuition, presence and accessibility, leaders are continuously communicating. The messages that leaders send, both verbal and non-verbal, should be carefully monitored because they have long-lasting consequences. The language of potential requires trust. Followers need to be able to trust their leaders to be active listeners and keen observers.

When we try to help others reach their potential, we, as leaders, must guide a group of people towards maturity as a community—this is where true growth happens. Leaders should establish a **critical mass**—which is a group of people who are willing to act as advocates for the common purpose/mission.

Buzz Words for Language of Potential:

- Vision
- Healing
- Thanks
- Forgiveness
- Harmony
- Please
- Momentum
- Love
- Truth
- Service
- Unity
- Hope
- Restoration

Significant Concepts Continued

Tasks for Families:

- Provide unconditional love
- Teach & Demonstrate a clear, concrete set of values
- Teach the importance of work
- Teach appropriate social and functional skills
 - Forming relationships
 - Manners & Respect
 - Importance of expectations
- Teach how to manage resources
- Teach children to be lifelong learners
- Explore the future together
- Celebrate together

Service Has Its Roots

Who we are and what we know stems from the development of concepts we learned through our interactions and observations of our family. As we grow up, we are exposed to beliefs, values, morals and language that determine, to an extent, the kind of person we will become as an adult. Our initial understandings of relationships, competence, and commitment to service are influenced by our childhood and adolescent experiences.



Attributes of Vital Organizations

- Truth
- Access to:
 - Opportunities, health care, meaningful work, a mentor, a leader, chances to learn, healthy relationships
- Discipline (dedication)
- Accountability
- Nourishment for persons
- Authenticity
- Justice
- Respect
- Hope
- Workable Unity
- Tolerance
- Simplicity
- Beauty & Taste
- Fidelity to a Mission

Vision

A vision is a goal or ideal that we relentlessly strive to reach but never will. One important thing to note is that parts of a vision must be realistically attainable in order to maintain motivation and keep people from losing hope. Some questions we must ask ourselves: why must we have a vision? What can vision do for us? Why is vision valuable? How is vision related to renewal or innovation? How can a vision unite, inspire, and give purpose?



Significant Concepts Cont...



Trust Me

Both leaders and followers have a deep desire to trust and be trusted. Trust is not something that grows independently—it must be cultivated and protected. Being dependable, taking others seriously and recognizing follower gifts and strengths are all ways that leaders can build trust. Interestingly, micro-management of followers sends a disrespectful message and erodes trust.

Why Risk It?

The ambiguity and uncertainty of taking risks can be uncomfortable for many people, yet it is through risk that we grow, mature, and experience real change. How much of a risk we are willing to take determines how far we, as individuals or organizations, can go towards reaching our potential.

The Function of Hope

Non-profit organizations strive to build hope in others by focusing on common goals, committing to service, and by sharing a vision of how the world could be. Hopeful followers have opportunities to participate in meaningful and challenging work, and feel like a necessary part of their organization. Hope encourages maturity, growth and accountability—which in turn push us closer to reaching our potential.



Elements of a Legacy

A legacy is what others remember about the choices we made, how we treated others, how we lived, and what kind of a person we were. If we start out with legacy in mind, it changes our perspective and helps us to focus on the big picture—thinking about how our decisions will impact our world years from now. As leaders, one of the greatest legacies we can leave behind is a new generation of leaders.

“Questions often makes us uncomfortable, especially good questions, but they can be the source of insight and the beginning of progress,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 53).

“Organizations could never run if everyone had to agree on everything first,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 57).

“For examples of acceptable behavior we all naturally look to leaders. Leaders are walking, talking manuals of behavior,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 62).

Memorable Quotes

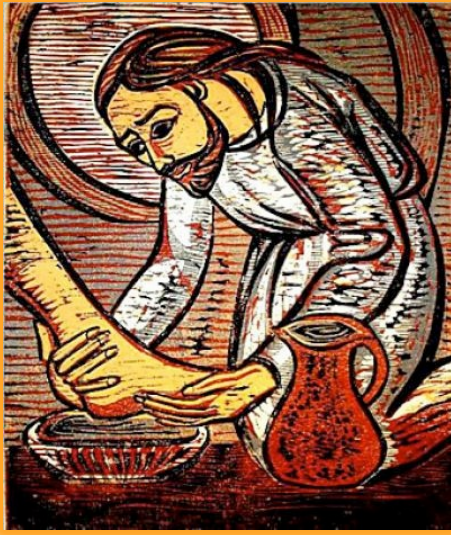
“We must teach ourselves to be vulnerable to people who don’t agree with us, to people whose experiences force us to consider a different perception, to welcome our own ignorance,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 79).

“Perhaps a way to think about the difference between sight and vision is this: we can teach ourselves to see things the way they are. Only with vision can we begin to see things the way they can be,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 116).

“When trust permeates a group, great things are possible, not the least of which is a true opportunity to reach our potential,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 123).

“Each of us is capable of being a mentor in one way or another. If we think about leaving a legacy, we will establish these relationships, because mentoring is a really crucial element to growth,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 174).

Connections to Leadership



Servant Leadership

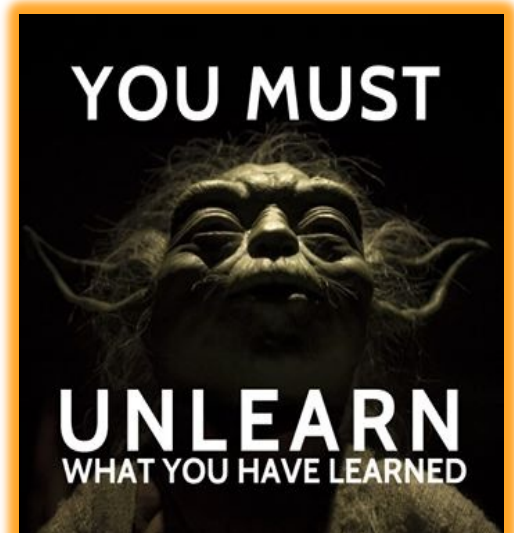
In *Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community*, Max De Pree conveys the importance of leaders using servanthood to help their followers (employees, volunteers, etc.) move towards their fullest potential. He lays out his ideas of the important aspects that organizations must focus on in order to accomplish this. Emphasizing things like truth, integrity, trust, vision and hope—he attempts to give readers an understanding of what places of realized potential look like. He consistently presents ideas that parallel what we know about servant leadership.

Servant leaders are "altruistic and humanistic" (Northouse, 2016, pp. 239) and do not seek to gain personally from the outcomes of their leadership. In putting the needs of the followers first, servant leaders aim to empower them and facilitate their development (Northouse, 2016). As these leaders seek to further the goals and intentions of the organization and/or community, they see their followers move towards self-actualization, some becoming leaders themselves. Other outcomes are increased organizational performance and a positive impact on society (Northouse, 2016).

Northouse (2016) describes how servant leaders consistently take into account followers' thoughts, feelings, and personal views. They also demonstrate commitment to organizational goals, and an ability to use past experiences to inform decisions and direction for the future. These leaders strive to build and maintain a community where people have a safe, accepting environment to be a part of something bigger.

Adaptive Theory

In his musings about transitions, De Pree presents the importance of using analysis, problem solving and intuition to deal with change. Although transitions can be risky, and make us uncomfortable, he emphasizes that transitions offer opportunities for growth and maturing—intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. Adaptive leaders support their followers through this process, and help them come to a place where they feel capable of implementing change. Adaptive leaders encourage followers to develop their potential by confronting their perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs in the face of change. They interact with followers in a way that helps them to change to meet the needs, or vision, of the organization (Northouse, 2016).



Practical Application:

In my role as a teacher, my every day focus and ultimate goal is to further the education of my students by helping them move towards their fullest potential. Here are my top ten applicable insights from *Leading Without Power, Finding Hope in Serving Community*, by Max De Pree:

1. Always give students work that is both challenging and meaningful
2. Forgive mistakes of “growing up” (not knowing better)
3. Measure results as a way to inform future decisions
4. Act with integrity (words and actions should match)
5. Recognize the importance of home and family in development (roots)
6. Encourage and practice respect (civility, good manners, language)
7. Keep promises
8. Cultivate trust by being consistent, dependable and predictable
9. Give students choices (which builds hope)
10. Serve out of love

Critical Evaluation:

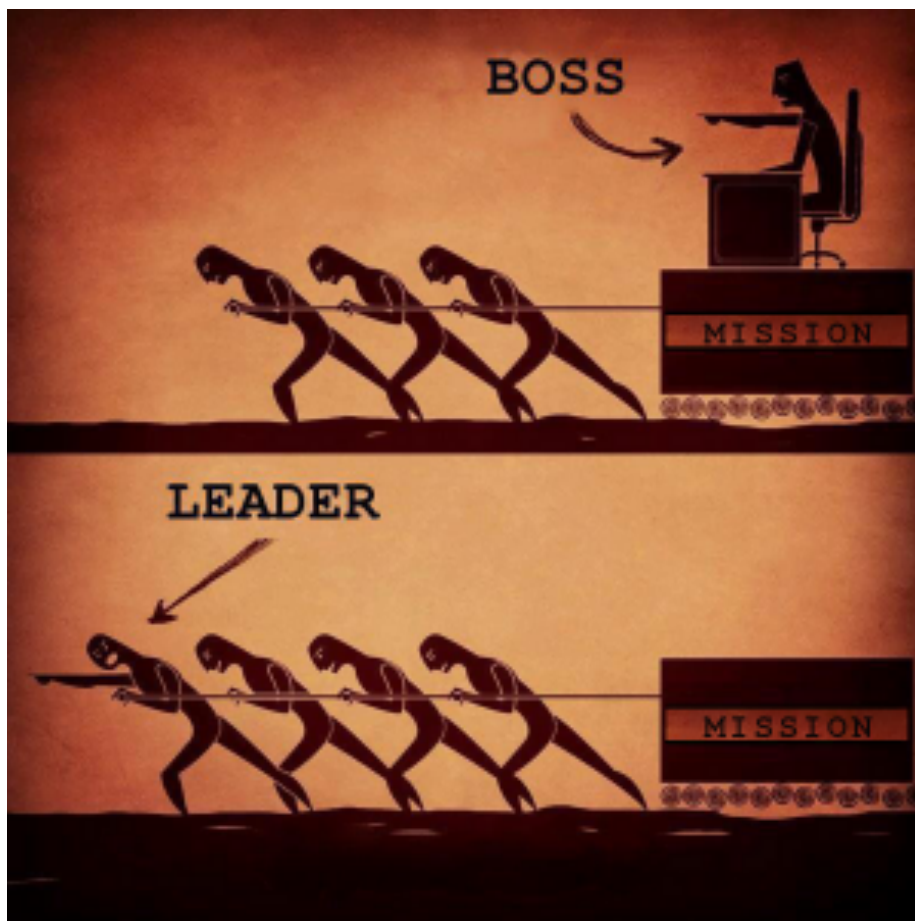
Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community, by Max De Pree, presents a jumble of disjointed thoughts, redundant ideas and seems more like a non-cohesive group of essays than a book. In the introduction, De Pree states that his intention is to present “an antithesis to our usual ideas about power and leadership,” (De Pree, 1997, pp. 1). However, what he does accomplish, in about 150 pages more than necessary, is a long-winded and very abstract recommendation for the incorporation of a servant leadership style in order to help individuals achieve their potential.

His intended aim of using non-profit organizations as a model for how all organizations should focus on realizing potential is unsuccessful. His generic and vague references to non-profit organizations offer little insight or clear direction about how for-profit organizations can implement strategies. While his original idea and educational intention in the writing of this book seem interesting, he never quite achieved it. Even after subsequent readings and note taking, some of the chapters left me unclear about what the message was. Reading this book felt a bit like listening to someone give a rambling speech that never quite hits its mark.

De Pree’s style of asking questions, to which there are no answers, left me feeling confused and cheated. Undertones of racism and discrimination in some chapters, lead me to feel that this book is not the best handbook for someone looking to pursue leadership. In picking up a book written by a highly regarded businessman and leader, I had higher hopes for applicable insights and strategies to incorporate into my professional practice.

Things to Ponder

- How has your family background (roots) influenced your conceptions of work, accountability and competence?
- What legacy do you want to leave?
- As a mentor, or leader, what do you bring to the table in terms of competency and contributions?



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