

Executive Book Summary by Jessica Iron

For Dr. Keith Walker, EADM 829

“It’s not authority that makes a leader, it’s whether people want to follow” (p.7).

## Book Summary

Bob Davids has headed 6 different companies (p.v). His wealth of experience inspired this collection of alphabetized topics on leadership (p.vii).

Davids believes that when a leader creates a truly successful culture, their organization can thrive—even in their absence (p.vii).

As Davids succinctly puts it, “If you think you are special, you are not. No one can bullshit the troops. Troops know who you are from your first words. It is best if you are one of the troops. A true leader subordinates him/herself to the staff. In war, the generals eat last” (Davids et al., 2019, p.8).





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“...Culture is needed because a leader cannot be everywhere all the time. Put differently, culture embodies a leader’s presence, even when he’s absent.”

p.74

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### Evaluation by Jess

This was a somewhat interesting book, but it reeked of testosterone. The authors got the idea for the book while drinking wine. I’m suggesting that they kept drinking while writing it.

There were only two graphics in the entire book. There were no chapters or sections. There was no logical formula of advice for eager readers to follow. Alphabetizing the topics according to manly titles was just one step above laziness, in my eyes. It was basically a nightmare book to choose for an executive book summary, but I’m far too cheap to purchase another book, so I stuck with it.

Some of the advice was profoundly ridiculous, which is why I created sections highlighting these words as “Crap advice”. Most of the advice seemed to be directed by men for men as female pronouns were so extremely rare they stood out quite oddly when they were actually listed.

That being said, I did think some advice was genuinely useful and I appreciated it. Ultimately, this book desperately needed some feminine energy and maybe sobriety. I would suggest reading it at your own risk.

Spare the expense and borrow it from the library.

#### Useful Advice: p.22

##### Decisions, Stealing Them

“Decisions need to be pushed down to the lowest level possible,” argues the author of this section (p.22). Organizations are more effective, he says, when people take responsibility and control rather than waiting for one leader to decide everything (p.22).

He also says that real leaders steal authority by taking action and making decisions, suggesting that power is assertive, not passive (p.23).

#### Crap Advice #1, p.147

##### Tap-Dancing Whores

Sorry to disappoint you, but this point has nothing to do with tap-dancing or whores. He writes this title purely as a gimmick.

The author of this section says that “hired guns” have to produce creativity on the spot, for money, like a tap-dancing whore might be expected to perform (p.148).

Maybe it’s just me, but I found it hard to focus on this topic because all I could picture was tap-dancing and whores. I’m still trying to find the genius in this method.

**Meetings, Knocking the Edge off**

**Them**

In this second round of terrible advice, Davids tells of a time when two shareholders were so upset with each other that they were planning to bring their lawyers to a board meeting so that they could “engage in an all-out fight”(p.73).

Davids bought foam baseball bats before the meeting and wedged a chair under the door. He handed out baseball bats and told everyone to hit their opponents hard (p.74).

Luckily no one was hurt, and they chose to view the situation with humor instead (p.74). He suggests that the meeting went on to be productive, but I’m not so sure (p.74). I would’ve questioned his sanity.

I’m a little appalled that a leader would make a mockery of a serious situation. It also seemed like a PR/HR nightmare to encourage such shenanigans. Had the “opponents” took the fight literally and threw their bats aside, using their fists instead, who knows what might have happened.

I think a true leader would encourage both parties to discuss their issues in a productive manner rather than using brute force, even if his method only hinted at that kind of barbarism.

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*Useful Advice: Job Interviews, p.52*

*“Candidates have to have the job skills to be interviewed, but the interview is really about whether they fit our culture. Cultures are built one person at a time” (p.52).*

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*Useful Advice: Keeping the Culture, p.54*

*“My job now is keeper of the culture. That’s my job. I do it by talking to everybody every day: “Hello, how are you, how’s it going, what do you need?”(p.54)*

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*“THE MORE THINGS YOU DO  
WRONG, THE FASTER YOU LEARN.  
BUT IF YOU REFUSE TO  
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT WAS  
WRONG, YOU REFUSE TO LEARN.  
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT? THE  
KEY IS TO NOT MAKE THE SAME  
MISTAKE TWICE”  
(P.74).*



Effective leadership is more than just telling everybody  
to be like you!

#### [Useful Advice: MBWA is Better than MBA, p.71](#)

Dauids shares advice that was given to him by Bob Townsend (p.71). He says Townsend told him that he needed to practice “Management by Walking Around” (p.71). He says that the best way to become an effective leader is to walk around and speak with employees in person, as often as possible (p.71).

He says that being approachable and seen is a key to building relationships and trust (p.72). It is important that employees feel they can connect with leaders, which is why a leader must try to always be visible, even with extra-curricular activities (p.72). However, he must also build culture, because he cannot be everywhere at once and it is culture that will act on his behalf in his absence (p.72).

#### [Useful Advice: Suits, p.141](#)

Dauids learned very early on that when “suits” are called in, it means people are being paid as consultants to uncover issues in an organization (p.141). What this really means is that they are paying outside people to ask the questions that the leader should’ve been asking (p.141).

Then they ultimately discover that people don’t respect their leader, but the consultants can’t say that or they won’t get paid (p.142). So they give answers to all the questions that the leader could’ve asked in the first place (p.142).

Dauids says a lot of time and money is wasted this way, and most people get annoyed at the sight of “suits” (p.142).

USEFUL ADVICE: DISCIPLINE, P.24

DAVIDS DESPISES LONG MEETINGS, SO HE CREATED VERY SHORT MEETINGS WITH STRICT RULES (P.25). HE KEEPS WRITTEN MINUTES, ACTION ITEMS AND EVERYONE TAKES NOTES (P.25). THESE PARAMETERS KEEP EVERYONE FOCUSED AND RESPECTFUL OF EVERYONE'S TIME (P.25). "GOOD COMMUNICATION IS THE BLOOD OF THE COMPANY," SAYS DAVIDS (P.25).

USEFUL ADVICE: SUCCESS AND FUN, P.139

"FUN IS A COROLLARY TO SUCCESS," SAYS DAVIDS (P.139). HE SPEAKS OF THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN FUN AND SUCCESS AND HOW FUN NEEDS TO BE PLANNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF SUCCESS (P.139). "WE TALK OPENLY ABOUT HAVING FUN AND DECISIONS ARE MADE WITH LOOKING AT THE FUN FACTOR, ALONG WITH IMPROVING THE QUALITY FACTOR," SAYS DAVIDS (P.139).



### Crap Advice #3, p.75

#### Morale Soup

Dauids says that to set trust, you must focus on morale (p.75). You cannot set a bad precedent ever, or this will forever affect the morale (p.75). He likens this to a drop of urine in soup (p.76). He says no matter how much you dilute the soup or disinfect the bowl, urine will have always been in the soup (p.76). That's the bad precedent (p.76).

What I would like to know is why there is even urine in the soup?????? Who is making this soup? Why do I have to imagine urine in my soup for this point to be made???

Once again, if a woman had been part of the creation of this book, we probably wouldn't have to think of urine ever being in our soup. Bon appetit.



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An entrepreneur has the ability to see the future market—like looking a long way down the road (a bit obvious). A *visionary* sees down the road and around the corner (not at all obvious).

p.173

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USEFUL ADVICE: PERFORMANCE REVIEWS, P.99

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Dauids’s formula for performance reviews is to give fifty percent positive feedback on things an employee is doing right and fifty percent on things the employee could do to grow (p.99). He says this helps to minimize lawsuits (p.99). If the employee is doing a flawless job, he recommends courses the employee could take in order to grow, since everyone could benefit from more education (p.99).



#### CRAP ADVICE #4, P.78

#### MOTIVATIONAL DIAPERS

Continuing with the theme of bathroom analogies, Davids shares another vivid lesson, this time focusing on the use of diapers (p.78).

This time he says, “You have to take care of people’s needs and a lot of needs aren’t pleasant. It’s like changing diapers on adults” (p.78).

He then spends the next few paragraphs outlining how long it takes to deal with people’s needs and get them “back into the workforce”(p.79).

I would be horrified if my leader were to score me on a scale of needy/poopy and how much time it takes as affecting our bottom line.

Does he really build trust with his employees as much as he thinks he does??



#### Useful Advice: A Natural, P.82

This is probably my favorite piece of advice in this entire book.

Davids tells of how he was studying with a great trombone teacher (p.82). He had 14 years of training and in walked a natural (p.82). A man played amazingly after only two years of practice (p.82).

Davids’s teacher told him that he needed to find something that he was natural at too, or “you will always be looking over your shoulder for the rest of your life for the young natural people coming to take your job” (p.83).

When he reflected on this, he realized he had a natural talent for design (p.82). He had won a huge competition just the month previous, and he hadn’t even tried (p.82). He decided to give up the trombone and focus on design (p.83). He entered a college and became first in his class with ease (p.83). Design has always come naturally to him, and it doesn’t feel like work to him (p.83).

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*Useful Advice: The Secret of Becoming a CEO, p.120*

*The way to become a CEO, according to Davids, is to make more mistakes than anyone else (p.120). However, there is one caveat. He says, “The trick in life is not to make the same mistake twice” (p.120).*

*He claims that the best way to learn is to make mistakes and if you are making more mistakes than anyone else, you will learn faster than others (p.120). He trained one manager to willingly make mistakes, so that he could grow exponentially and be promoted (p.121).*



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CRAP ADVICE #5, P.91

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### **One Percent Exception, Getting Emotional**

Here, Davids suggests only raising your voice for shock value (p.91). He says it is the means he uses when he has lost all control (p.91). We know that. Whenever someone raises their voice, it is always because they have lost control. I think it is funny that he is pretending that this is some sort of strategy to market. He says he then pulls back to show sanity (p.92). Most people recognize in the moment after yelling that they have lost control and need to make amends. This is not a strategy, this is human nature. I am also concerned that he starts this section by saying, “True leaders do not use emotion, except 1% of the time” (p.92). I could probably write an entire thesis on the need for leaders to express vulnerability, so I very much disagree with this. You don’t have to yell to express emotion. People connect to vulnerability.

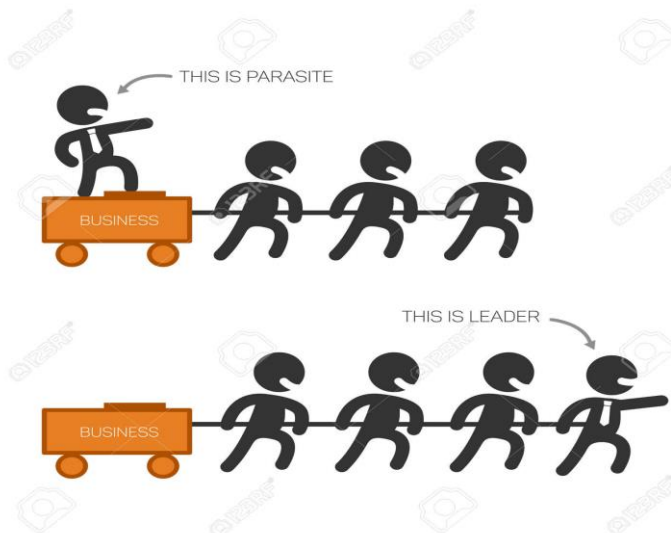


## USEFUL ADVICE: KICKING A BABY BIRD,

p.55

Here, Davids tells of the time he met a man on an airplane and changed his life (p.55). The man was afraid to take a chance in his career, and Davids suggested to him that he was afraid of the possibility that after he took a risk and failed, that he might end up exactly where he was (p.55). The man wrote this down and the next month quit his job and took that risk (p.55).

He became hugely successful and thanks Davids on an annual basis (p.55). He continues to tell everyone that Davids was the man who led to his success, but Davids reminds him that he merely pointed out a fact to him, and the man did all the work himself (p.55).



## Crap Advice #6, p.84

### Negotiating With Wings

I saved the best for last. This was by far my favorite piece of crap advice. It is The King of All Crap Advice.

Davids says that he tries to intellectualize everything at work and doesn't like when he gets emotional (p.84). When he feels himself starting to become emotional, he imagines himself wearing white angel wings and flying 200 meters above the room so that he can see himself more clearly (p.85).

In psychology, this is called "disassociation". It's not a good thing. The fact that he's promoting it is quite disturbing. It is disassociating with your humanity, a deliberate splitting of various parts of your Self.

He says, "Once I can intellectualize, then I can become a true leader" (p.85) Wow. I can think of many leaders who prescribed to this mentality. All of them are infamous for a reason.



### Useful Advice: Ultimate Power, p.167

Dauids believes that there are two “waves” of power between a leader and his followers (p.167). In the first wave, a leader gets power and his followers watch to see if she uses that power for himself or others (p.167).

If he uses his power for others, his followers give him a second wave of power (p.167). This time around, he gains allegiance, and this is the truest kind of power because followers know their leader truly represents them (p. 168).

Dauids, B., Carney, B. M., & Getz, I. (2019). *Leadership without ego: How to stop managing and start leading*. Palgrave Macmillan.

### Lao Tzu, p.46

Why do the hundred rivers turn and rush toward the sea?

Because it naturally stays below them

He who wishes to rule over the people must speak as if below them

He who wishes to lead the people must walk as if behind them

So the Sage rules over the people but he does not weigh them down

He leads the people but he does not block their way

The Sage stays low so the world never tires of exalting him

He remains a servant so the world never tires of making him its king.

