



LEADERSHIP on The Line

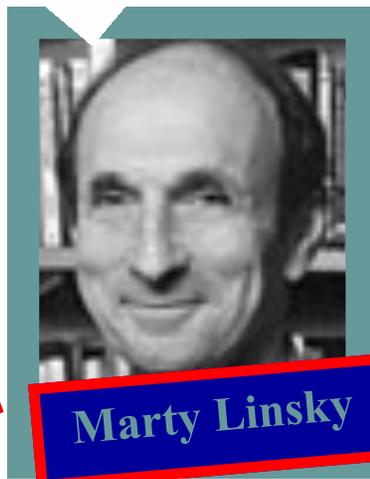
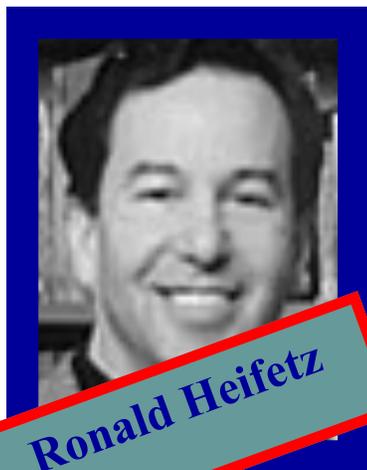
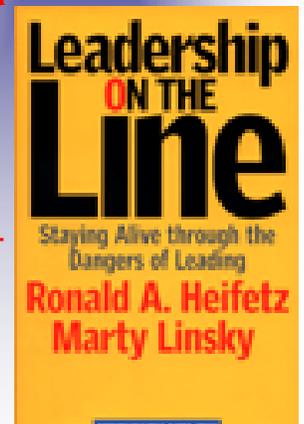
Critiqued by Tom Paterson
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While Nike has us “just doing it” Heifetz and Linsky lay it “on the line” awakening our minds to the realities, challenges, and most importantly intricacies of leadership. It’s discourse sorted into three distinct parts.

Part One sets the stage for the books treatise by exposing the pratfalls of leadership; how we get “taken out of the game”.

Part Two is the action plan to successful leadership. The text becomes a gold mine of brilliantly positioned metaphors the cornerstones being “getting to the balcony, and listening to the “song within the words”.

Part Three reaffirms the essence of sustained leadership is the delicate balancing act of maintaining personal and professional perspective.



From University of Harvard this unlikely duo of Heifetz and Linsky have blended their professional acumen of music and psychiatry, media and politics into a very practical reader friendly expose of leadership. Their diverse interests both professionally and personally gave the book a genuine feel of practical authenticity.

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Part One – The Challenge – Chapters 1 & 2

The goal of the Challenge that we the reader see the very real risks and rewards of leadership.

Leadership welcomes all of us to consider taking the lead. Some of us choose it some of us don't.

My name is Lois and I am an alcoholic

Quintessentially the story of Lois dealing with her alcoholism and initiating AA gatherings puts the leadership question in our own backyard. It exposes a side of humanity that we can all in some way connect with.

How strong do you hold to your convictions? When the chips are down where are you?

For My Country

For Yitzhak Rabin prime minister of Israel his conviction for the greater common good; PEACE was self evident in his actions and words. It cost him his life.

The Yitzhak Rabin story reveals the gravity of leadership. And identifies also the adaptive dimension of leadership. People don't change easily because it means giving up something they are sure of for something they are not sure of. Ultimately in some form change means a loss of some-

The message here is not particularly about the alcoholism or the choice to face it... but rather the perseverance of leadership, its conviction and courage to lead.

You appear dangerous to people when you question their values, beliefs, or habits of a lifetime. You place yourself on the line when you tell people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear.
(p.12)

IBM

To act outside the narrow confines of your job description when progress requires it lies close to the heart of leadership and it's danger.

A recurrent danger brought out in Chapter one deals with risk taking, particularly as it pertains to stepping outside of your usual task or job parameters. By 1994 IBM had spent three successive years losing money, (i.e.) \$15 billion. For David Grossman an engineer with the company, the watershed leading to change was the 1994 Olympics. IBM had been awarded the contract to be in charge of data

management (getting the results up and out to everyone). Grossman surfing the web found that IBM's data had been pirated by Sun Microsystems, displayed prominently on Sun's web site.

With this new reality a new problem emerged. IBM needed to step into the internet market, an area they had been long hesitant to do. What it also meant was that they had to change their attitude. The tools to create a solution for the data problem was easy. It was something IBM was renowned for skillfully doing. The other component proved far more taxing.

The underlying value structure of the organization was characterized by a smug parochialism coupled with a resistance to early entry into new markets. (p.21)

Who's problem is it?

A very important point Heifetz and Linsky make is in recognizing the two types of problems leaders and organizations face, (technical and adaptive) and as importantly recognizing that one is easier to correct than the other. It was the latter that causes the most grief.

Distinguishing Technical from Adaptive Challenges

	What's the Work	Who Does the Work
Technical	Apply Current know how	Authorities
Adaptive	Learn New Ways	The people with the problem

What makes the problem technical is not that it is trivial; but simply that its solution already lies within the organization's repertoire. In contrast, adaptive pressures force the organization to change, lest it decline.

For Lois the problem was adaptive. It took several months to get others to sit in the chairs at her AA meetings. For IBM it was both adaptive and technical. The engineers were skilled in the technical side of the problem solving equation but lacked the understanding to lead change with the adaptive component.

The other dimension that makes adaptive change so difficult is as the authors suggest, our "loyalties".

We as a culture value loyalty. We cheer for the same hockey team each year. We carry on the

To abandon our values, habits and attitudes is to be disloyal. to their origin..

family tradition of using only crest toothpaste for three generations.

Habits, values, and attitudes even dysfunctional ones, are part of one's identity. To change the way people see and do things is to challenge how they define themselves. Habits are hard to give up because they give stability.

DIVESTING IN PEOPLE

Have you ever held a job, been given a task and then during or after completion feeling like your autonomy, control of the project or self worth has been devalued?

The devaluing of the employee or employer can be pervasive, and reach personally and organizationally intolerable levels.

Heifetz and Linsky bring to the forefront wonderfully relevant examples of how either workers and/or bosses bring productivity, and self worth to a crashing halt.

The faces of danger are culturally learned. Gender issues, the need to be liked or to please, pull us some-

Faces of Danger

Marginalization

- ⇒ The gender issue
- ⇒ The technical aspect
- ⇒ Unwitting collusion
- ⇒ You are special
- ⇒ Personalization

Diversion

- ⇒ Glamorous responsibility
- ⇒ Lost in other peoples demands and program details

Attack

- ⇒ Personal attack
- ⇒ Physical attack
- ⇒ Politics
- ⇒ Misrepresentation

Seduction

- ⇒ Aiming to please at all costs.
- ⇒ The constituency problem

times more powerfully away from the right thing to do. Selfish motives of false truths (say this mean another) divert direction from the important parts of the work to be done.

Part Two
The Response
Build it and They will come

The lone warrior myth of leadership is a sure route to heroic suicide.

View your situation as if you were on a balcony looking out upon it. .

- 1 Distinguish tech from adaptive problems.
- 2 Find out where people are at.
- 3 Listen to the song beneath their words
- 4 Read the behavior of authority figures for clues

Achieving a balcony perspective means taking yourself out of the dance in your mind even if only for a moment.

Disequilibrium

Asking people to leave behind something they have lived with for years or for generations practically invites them to get rid of you. Sometimes leaders are taken out simply because they do not appreciate the sacrifice they are asking from others.

The challenge of leadership when trying to generate adaptive change is to work with differences, passions, and conflicts in a way that diminishes their destructive potential and constructively harnesses their energy.

You need to take the temperature of the group constantly, trying to keep it high enough to motivate people, but not so high that it paralyzes them.

Maintain the capacity for reflection, even in the "fog of war".

Part 2 is about "*reducing the risk of being pushed aside.*" Chapter 4 likes to have us think that leadership is about thinking politically. But at its core is something far more dear to the heart of leadership. *If you don't form bonds you don't lead.*

- ♥ Find Partners
- ♥ Keep the Opposition close
- ♥ Accept Responsibility
- ♥ Acknowledge loss of others
- ♥ Model Behavior

How to Control the Heat

Raise the Temperature

- 1 Draw attention to the tough questions.
- 2 Give people more responsibility than they are comfortable with.
- 3 Bring conflicts to the surface.
- 4 Protect gadflies and oddballs.

Lower the Temperature

- 1 Address the technical aspects of the problem
- 2 Establish a structure for the problem-solving process by breaking the problem into parts and creating time frames, decision rules, and clear role assignments.
- 3 Temporarily reclaim responsibility for the tough issues.
- 4 Employ work avoidance mechanisms.
- 5 Slow down the process of challenging norms and expectations.

In Summary of Chapters 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7

Responding to the challenges of organizations is heavily reliant on leadership having strong and intuitive communication skills. As pointed out in the book a leader's success is all about how stress within the membership is dealt with. Stress itself is a function of growth. You can't have growth (change) without some level of stress. It is when stress within the membership develops a disequilibrium that leadership must be particularly skilled. In essence the section titled RESPONSE addresses, perspective, bonding, decision making, responsibility, conviction, and consistency.

Chapter 3 – **Get on the Balcony** – is all about leadership maintaining a **PERSPECTIVE** and thereby not becoming out of balance.

Chapter 4 – **Think Politically** – is really about **BONDING** and **BUILDING BRIDGES**. – Without a healthy and connected relationship with the membership one cannot lead.

Chapter 5 – **Orchestrate the Conflict** – is about **DECISION MAKING**. The disequilibrium that comes with renewal or growth of an organization and its membership needs leadership that can direct the traffic of discontent to a fair resolution.

Chapter 6 – **Give the Work Back** – clearly is **RESPONSIBILITY**. For leadership a delicate balance exists between when leaders may lift the burden temporarily from the backs of members but then ultimately must return it to them to problem solve effective solutions.

Chapter 7 – **Hold Steady** – revolves around **CONVICTION** and **CONSISTENCY**. Productive and healthy organizations can have everything else going for it but if their leader is not about conviction and consistency it will falter.

So... you know what you want but...

Chapter 8

Leaders need to know their strengths, feeling confident in their ability to lead but not lost in their own self interest. Self importance undermines leadership skills. To ward off the debilitating effects of self interest. Leaders need to remain balanced and focused. *Self knowledge and self-discipline form the foundation for staying alive.*

Grandiosity sets you up for failure because it isolates you from reality.

IT IS CRUCIAL TO GET TO THE BALCONY REPEATEDLY TO REGAIN PERSPECTIVE, TO SEE HOW AND WHY YOUR PASSIONS ARE BEING STOKED

The desire to fulfill the needs of others can become a vulnerability if it feeds into your own normal hungers for power, importance, and intimacy.

We are all of us, vulnerable to falling prey to our own hungers.

Zone of Insatiability

– that place within where no matter how much you do and how good it is, it's never enough. In this never ending need for self importance and affirmation you might gain the world and lose yourself. Bottom line don't lose your intimacy consider developing a ritual or routine with the mindful intent of separating yourself from your role.

Chapter 9

If you haven't gotten it yet, leadership is tough
 Anchoring yourself means investing in your own mental health. Allies and confidants, role separation, and a place of sanctuary are all viable methods to protect your own wellbeing, and restore your energy.

Confidants = people you can trust implicitly.
Allies = those who will defend and stand with you on issues because they have a conviction to the same cause.
Confidants may be able to do what Allies can but... Allies are not confidants.

Your management of the attack more than the substance of the accusation determines your fate.

Chapter ten is about knowing deeply why you lead. For as much as there are obstacles and plights of

Chapter 10

human nature that can throw leaders off and misdirect their energies true leaders keep coming back, reworking and figuring their way through the entanglements of leadership. The implication in this chapter is if you are madly and deeply in love with, and passionate about, your leadership you will excel at the task. Chapter ten also gives us a glimpse at two common misconceptions leaders may hold that can undo their leadership. One is the Myth of Measurement, the other believing that the form of the contribution matters more than the content.

Measurement is profoundly useful but it cannot tell us what makes life worth living

C11

Wanna play it safe, Give this a whirl

Chapter eleven more than any other chapter takes us very close if not into the realm of spirituality. It is also a very good connect or progression from chapter ten. The elixirs or fix its offered in chapter 11 parallel a spiritual root.

LOSING HEART

Quality of the Heart	Becomes	Dressed up as
Innocence	Cynicism	Realism
Curiosity	Arrogance	Authoritative knowledge
Compassion	Callousness	The thick – skin of experience

Cynicism arrogance, and callousness may be the safest ways to live but they also suffocate the very aliveness we strive to protect.

A Sacred Heart

A sacred heart means you may feel tortured and betrayed, powerless and hopeless, and yet stay open. It's the capacity to encompass the entire range of your human experience without hardening or closing yourself. Leading with an open heart helps you stay alive in your soul. Helps you mobilize others to do the same – to face challenges that demand courage, and to endure the pains of change without deceiving themselves or running away.

ally ideas, think unusual and perhaps ingenious thoughts
 curiosity – in the short run honesty is the best policy- people may trust you less when you share your doubts, as they

