

About the Authors



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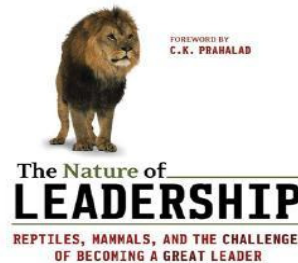
White has written, taught and lectured extensively on leadership, management and organizational matters.



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The Nature of Leadership

Reptiles, Mammals, and the Challenge of Becoming A Great Leader



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■ The Big Idea

Leaders come in all shapes, sizes and types. Some are the reptiles, the cold-blooded, tough-as-nails decision makers with their eyes on the numbers and a focus on control. Others are the mammals, the warm-blooded, compassionate creatures who connect with those around them and build success through mutual trust and open communication.

Good leaders, of course, combine the best attributes of both. And the truly great leader is the one who transcends type and moves beyond usual barometers of success to achieve real change in his or her organization.

It is time to challenge yourself to become a great leader. It won't be easy or quick. After all, writes Joe White, "You can't become a Great Leader just by deciding that's your goal." Still, by setting the goal, you will commit yourself to climb what the author calls the Leadership Pyramid and achieve milestones in your professional and personal development.

All the skills and qualities will coalesce into something bigger than the sum of their parts, an intangible but very real "sparkle factor" that separates the great leaders from the merely good.

Why You Need This Book

This book will take you beyond the usual boundaries of type to a realm of individual and organizational growth reserved for only the greatest leaders.

BECOME A LEADER, A BETTER LEADER, A GREAT LEADER

The Reptile and Mammal metaphors can help us visualize the enormous variety of challenges that leaders face, and how to deal with them effectively.

Leadership involves the head and the heart. It is both analytical and interpersonal. Having the range and repertoire to be cold-blooded, rational, and decisive at times, and at other times warm-blooded, nurturing, and participative, and knowing when to be which, is always a huge personal challenge.

It's right up there with running marathons or learning to play the violin well. Or more accurately, running marathons and playing the violin well. To be a good leader, you have to be as tough as nails (reptilian excellence) and warm as toast (Mammalian excellence). Achieving both kinds of excellence is a necessary but not sufficient condition of being a great leader.

So what is the sufficient condition? Let's put the answer right up front. To be a great leader, you have to be successful at achieving change – important, consequential change in the results for which you are responsible. Bringing about change successfully is a leader's greatest challenge.

It is not by accident that America's greatest presidents – Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt – all led winning wars that produced great and positive change: the birth of a nation, the elimination of slavery, the defeat of tyranny. To be a great leader, your results have to be excellent – you have to win – and your results need to produce consequential change.

BOTH CRITICAL

The best leaders must be both Reptilian and Mammalian. Here's why:

Leaders must be Reptilian because organizations are challenged to survive in a competitive, Darwinian environment and because they are populated by fallible human beings who are, at times, negligent, fraudulent, ornery, and bullying.

Leaders must be Mammalian because organizations are composed of human beings who are free to choose the organizations with which they affiliate, possess the knowledge and ideas the organization needs to thrive, are capable of amazing and wonderful things, and are hungry for inspiration, challenge, achievement, and recognition.

Leaders must be Reptilian because people need order, stability, routines, and resources in order to perform productively, reliably, and efficiently.

Leaders must be Mammalian because people need attention, room to grow, and someone to believe in them in order to do their best, learn and be creative.

Leaders must be Reptilian in order to establish authority and exercise power. They must be Mammalian because their subordinates deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Leaders must be Reptilian to stand up to a harsh and threatening competitive environment. They must be Mammalian to embrace and empathize with suffering humanity.

Leaders must be Reptilian because organizations need good management. They must be Mammalian because people deserve good leadership.

Reptilian leadership improves the odds that an organization will survive. Mammalian leadership improves the odds that an organization will thrive.

THE LEADERSHIP PYRAMID

The pyramid has four components:

- **Foundation Requirement.** To be a leader, you must have a great desire to be in charge. This is not necessarily ego-driven. Usually it springs from a personal belief that you could guide, organize, and support others effectively to accomplish a goal – win a ball game, raise money, build a company, win an election.
- **Reptilian Requirements.** This is the vital hard side of leadership work. Its foundation is good economic sense combined with financial management skills, an instinct to verify (audit) what is being reported as reality, and a strong penchant for control, follow-up, and attention to detail. This approach requires rational analysis, discipline, and toughness.
- **Mammalian Requirements.** This is the vital soft side of leadership work. It requires “people sense” that rests on good intuition and genuine empathy, the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes. Its foundation is communication skills, both listening and “broadcasting” in writing, speaking, and nonverbal terms. This approach is characterized by warm engagement and nurturing others to learn, grow, develop and succeed.
- **Great Leader Requirements.** This is the work of leadership at the highest level. It is about making consequential and successful change. The top of the pyramid assumes that you have the ability to be hard and soft and the instincts and experience to know what each situation requires.

WHY DO LEADERS NEED TO BE TOUGH?

There are at least five answers to that question. Leaders need to be tough to survive, to set the tone at the top, to establish authority and credibility, to get things done, and to ensure strong management.

1. Toughness gives their organizations a chance to survive. Leaders need to be tough because they are responsible for companies and organizations that must survive in a competitive environment.

2. Toughness sets the tone at the top. When it comes to standards, accountability, and consequences, leaders must say what they mean and show they mean what they say. Actions that back up words – more than the words – determine a community's standards.
3. Toughness establishes and maintains authority and credibility. When ambitious people dream of being in great leadership roles – president, managing director, admiral, dean – they often think their quest will have ended when they get appointed or elected. Actually, their work has just begun.
4. Toughness gets things done. Setting deadlines, being insistent, not taking no for an answer, and demanding disciplined execution are all essential for a leader to get things done, and done well, through other people.
5. Toughness ensures strong management, which is just as important as inspired leadership. Tough-minded, demanding management, even perfectionism, is essential to successful leadership and is characteristic of high-performing organizations.

WHAT ARE THE CAPABILITIES AND INSTINCTS TO DEVELOP TO BECOME A TOUGH LEADER?

A famous line from Kenny Rogers's song "The Gambler" is that in poker, "You've got to know when to hold them, know when to fold them." As a leader, you need to know when to be tough and when to be warm, empathetic, and understanding.

Leaders must display exceptional toughness in six areas:

1. Understanding financial matters
2. Setting the bar high
3. Dealing with bullies
4. Serving as judge and jury
5. Cutting
6. Litigating

THE LEADERSHIP TRIAD: STRETCH, SUPPORT, CONNECT

The managers who led change most effectively and those who developed leaders most successfully shared a common approach that we were able to synthesize and describe simply as “stretch-support-connect.”

Stretch means creating a challenging picture of the future to which you want your organization to aspire, sometimes out of necessity, sometimes as a matter of choice.

Support means two things. First, understand people’s hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties in the face of change; articulate them on everyone’s behalf; and address them as fully as possible.

Second, ensure that people have the resources they need, such as authority, direction, expertise, and your support and confidence, to do their part in the change process.

Connect means putting the right people in touch with each other, ensuring that the right conversations and coordination are occurring, and providing everyone with the milestones of progress to keep them on the same page and moving forward.

LINCOLN AND THE FIVE QUALITIES OF GREAT LEADERS

What made Lincoln a Great Leader is that he achieved great results and he envisioned and produced truly consequential change (he ended slavery, giving millions of Americans their freedom). How did Lincoln do it? The same way other Great Leaders produce results and make change:

- They are innovative and don’t succumb to conventional wisdom.
- They take calculated but significant risks that pay off.
- They surround themselves with extraordinarily talented people and bring out the best in them.

- They have an unusual sense of perspective, looking ahead, back and sideways.
- They have personal qualities – presence, charisma, magnetism – that make them “sparkle.”

CHALLENGE YOURSELF: BECOME A GREAT LEADER

Here are some parting thoughts for you:

- Remember that developing yourself is a journey you can take but should never finish.
- Strive for good endings in your leadership work. Leave on good terms and manage succession responsibly.
- Be resilient. How you cope with doubt, discouragement, disappointment, and occasional failure is vital to your success.

Good luck! Our world needs you to succeed.

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