
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Leader You Want to Be: Five Essential Principles for Bringing Out Your Best Self—Every Day***

Author: **Amy Jen Su**

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Introduction

“*The Leader You Want to Be*” was written by executive coach Amy Jen Su to illustrate how choosing to employ either of two imaginary contrasting mindsets can cause some people to succeed as leaders while others fail.

The successful “Leader A” mindset promotes relaxed, confident, servant leaders who are generous of spirit; the “Leader B” mindset causes stressful, uncertain, needy, and dictatorial behaviors.

The author contends that all of us frequently switch back and forth between “A” and “B” modes and relates anecdotes from her coaching experiences to show how some “Leader B” types became more effective by using “Leader A” thinking.

Overview of Book’s Structure

Introduction – explains the two Leader mindsets and defines a framework of five principles (Purpose, Process, People, Presence, and Peace) common to effective leadership.

Chapter 1 – defines four stress-inducing pitfalls people fall into that sabotage successful “A” actions while trying to get things done when time is short:

- Just Do More
- Just Do It Now
- Just Do It Myself
- Just Do It Later

Chapter 2 – The Power of Purpose guides the reader in identifying the tangible and intangible elements of his(/her) contribution and the passion (motivation, energy, and

inspiration) elements behind accomplishing actions. Once defined, the contribution and passion elements are mapped into a two-by-two matrix which facilitates prioritization and scheduling.

Chapter 3 – The Power of Process encourages leaders to understand and work within their personal preferences concerning process and structure with an eye to reconciling priorities with passion and contributive value.

Chapter 4 – The Power of People covers points about who has the skills and abilities to do what throughout the organization from now into the future for succession planning and explores communication among departments for finding honest help, boundaries, and feedback. This author loves to make bullet lists throughout the book and creates many as checklisting exercises.

Chapter 5 – The Power of Presence explains using mindfulness techniques such as meditation and self-observation to be present, stay focused, and defend against being mentally or emotionally hijacked into Leader B mode.

Chapter 6 – The Power of Peace is essentially a deeper dive into the application of mindfulness as discussed in the previous chapter, helping readers to mindfully be happy with their accomplishments instead of being stuck in worry and self-disappointment.

Chapter 7 – Pay It Forward is a chapter lobbying leaders to spread Leader A mindsets throughout their respective organizations and to weed out the toxic effects that Leader B spreads.

Appendix – The Leader A Toolkit consists of many checklists of steps outlined in the chapters and ends with a Leader A versus B self-rating grid followed by “Worksheet Tools” to strategize using the five Powers for starting new endeavors, for managing stress, and for increasing Effectiveness, Discipline, Collaboration, or Satisfaction.

Highlights

One of the first lists in this book is a definition of “four pitfalls of doing things” that trip up even good leaders and get in the way of wisely timing, delegating, and sequencing actions.

The focused powers in the “Five P Framework” urge one first to identify one’s personal purpose for doing whatever it is that is being done and then to align the external factors of process and people and the internal factors of presence and peace.

Overall, the book combines each of the “Five P Framework” powers with separate cautions to avoid the four pitfalls that can creep in and promote mode “B” over “A”.

Highlights: What I liked!

In order to help leaders evaluate priorities competing for limited time, the intersection of contribution versus passion was introduced in the chapter on Purpose and then graphically plotted on a two-by-two matrix as explained in the Process chapter and then color-coded on a calendar for quick task reassignment as situations change.

The final section of the People chapter was clear in emphasizing that “Leader A” mindset requires humility and the willingness to admit fallibility, be receptive to feedback, and ask for help when needed.

As a fan of mindfulness myself, I appreciated the author’s spending some time in the chapter on Presence explaining mindfulness and alluding to it further in the chapter on Peace.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Senior and executive leaders will find part or all of this book to be helpful in building an outline for mentoring more junior leaders to be maximally effective and engaged in organizational missions.

It is essential that sufficient time be allocated in an organization if a leader chooses to split the content into numerous workshops covering many small topics in great detail. Breaking these lesson concepts into many small bites can improve effectiveness of developing successor leaders.

Conclusion

“The Leader You Want to Be: Five Essential Principles for Bringing Out Your Best Self—Every Day” may help organizational leaders to see leadership in a way that contrasts people who employ cooperative, confident, relaxed mindsets with those of people who employ defensive, fearful, worried mindsets.

All of us are reminded that we move through our lives with moments of both mindsets and have the power to choose which we want to use at any given time.

This book may be more appropriately housed in an office than a home library if the reader elects to use it as a guide for workplace self-improvement and training.

For more about this book, go to: <https://store.hbr.org/product/the-leader-you-want-to-be-five-essential-principles-for-bringing-out-your-best-self-every-day/10197>

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About the Reviewer



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Phil Elsner is a business results project manager in the Dallas, Texas area. He is a passionate advocate for using the talents of Project Management Professionals to get things accomplished in the business world with maximum effectiveness and minimum wasted effort.

Phil proudly holds multiple degrees in biomedical sciences from The University of Texas at Austin and the The University of Texas of The Permian Basin. He credits his high school Spanish teacher for his being English/Spanish bilingual.

He began his professional Information Technology career as an application programmer and rose through the ranks of systems analysis, systems design, and team leadership on his way to managing projects in industries as diverse as telecommunication, financial services, mortgage processing, and healthcare.

Phil grew up in the first FM radio station in West Texas and remains connected to broadcasting as project manager and executive producer of high school football on radio and Internet in the heart of the Permian Basin.

He is a Life Member of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity and a lifelong self-described “serial volunteer” leading networking groups in the Dallas area. Music

has always been a part of Phil's life. He has earned ten Barbershop Harmony Society gold medals as a bass singer in the Dallas-based Vocal Majority.

Coworkers have said that Phil Elsner is different from many other project managers because he never forgets that the processes completed in projects are done by real people who deserve to be treated as such and because he believes that keeping a relaxed environment and sense of humor on the job make people happier and outcomes better.

He is active in the PMI Dallas chapter and can be contacted at P.A.Elsner@gmail.com