

SAMPLE

DISCOVER THE JOY OF LEADERSHIP

A Practical Guide to Resolving
Your Management Challenges

WILLIAM G. STEINER

WHAT LEADERS ARE SAYING ABOUT DISCOVER THE JOY OF LEADERSHIP

This book is a wonderful reflection on the breadth of Willy's insightful counsel that he has provided to me and many of my leadership team over the years. I trust you will benefit as we have.

—Paul E. Purcell, Chairman, Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc. For 13 years, Baird has been honored among FORTUNE's 100 Best Companies to Work For.®

Willy Steiner is a leadership master. When I was running a large organization and needed an experienced hand to work with my executives, Willy was always who I would call for help. He helped me handle a variety of managers with a variety of issues and was effective in getting all of them moving in the right direction and actually changing and recognizing their behavior. This book is the “how to” handbook on Leadership. Anyone who considers themselves a leader at any level should have this book in their library...and USE IT.

—Rita Schaefer, Publishing Executive.

What a great gift to have Willy Steiner's succinct and savvy guide to leadership. As my executive coach, Willy always brought nuance and perspective to our discussions. He excels in the art of “sensemaking”—listening carefully to his clients, helping them interpret their dilemmas, and suggesting paths they might consider. His advice was consistently wise and thoughtful, and I could not have asked for a better partner.

—John Pauly, Provost, Marquette University, 2008-13 and currently “Gretchen and Cyril Colnik Chair in Communication, Marquette University.”

Over the years, I have appreciated Willy's direct and well-informed approach to providing suggestions and insights. For those who take advantage of its counsel, this book should prove to be an invaluable resource for both an organization's leaders and their teams.

—Paul J. Carbone, Managing Partner, Pritzker Group Private Capital

Willy showed me, and many on my team over the years, a path to becoming a much more effective manager. As my roles and responsibilities grew over the years, this foundation helped me in becoming a good leader as well. I am sure that Discover the Joy of Leadership can assist you in your personal leadership journey as well.

—Todd Dolan, Group Vice President, Software Development, Charter Communications

Early in my career, Coach Willy provided me with the no-nonsense counsel I need to adapt successfully to a broader leadership role. I trust that Discover the Joy of Leadership can assist you in a similar manner.

—Harley J. Goldstein, Esq., Founding Partner & Chairman, Goldstein & McClintock LLLP

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INTRODUCTION

I SAW THIS QUOTATION recently and it reminded me of why I've been able to be in business as an executive leadership coach for almost 20 years:

CFO to the CEO: What happens if we spend training funds developing our people and then they leave us?

CEO to CFO: What happens if we don't and they stay?

Here's a little background (I promise, just a little) to provide perspective. Early in my career I was fortunate to work in the leadership development functions of two major corporations, the RCA Corporation and General Electric. The RCA Corporation is no more, but General Electric is recognized for its consistent investments in developing leadership talent. At both organizations, if you were put into a management or leadership role, you received the appropriate training and development to prepare you to be effective not just in getting results for the business but in taking advantage of the human talent you lead to advance the goals of the business and allow the employees to develop as well. This was considered a wise investment for both the business and the human talent.

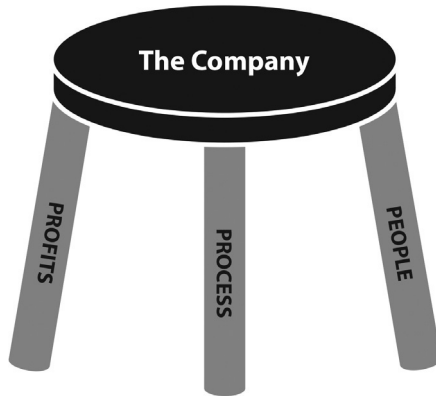
Although this may seem like ancient history, in the mid-1980s a shift saw training and development as a cost to be minimized and not an investment in the future of the business or that human talent. Over the years organizations have seen the folly of that perspective and have thrown money at the problem when times were flush, only to cut back again when times got tough. So there have been almost two generations of people who have not seen a consistent focus or investment in companies developing their talent. It's kept me in business for the last 20 years!

In my work as an executive leadership coach and in my previous corporate work, I did everything I could to research and explore what was being written about leadership and management and to stay as current as possible with new trends. Given the fact that I'm a bit of a "pack rat"—but a very organized one—I have accumulated a lot of information and concepts about the various elements of management and leadership. This has served my clients well, as I've been able to dip into this treasure trove of insights to provide the right material at the right time.

In an effort to maintain connections with the hundreds of people I have either served as a coach, worked with or just gotten to know over the last 30-plus years, I decided to create a blog about leadership on my website, www.executivecoachingconcepts.com, called the Coach's Corner. I always fancied myself a good wordsmith and a reasonably good writer; after all I was an English major for my first two years of college. But I really didn't know if what I was writing was hitting the mark and appreciated by the many folks I sent it to. As time went on, I got more and more positive feedback about how people valued what they read and often looked forward to my ideas and perspectives on the topics I chose.

From this work, a plan to create a book evolved. My purpose is to create a handy guide for managers and leaders that will provide specific insights on a wide range of topics. Each of the chapters is fairly short and each ends with some critical questions for you to ponder. I tend to think in models and I share them with my clients so they can become their own best coach. I have amassed a lot of information that I hope provides insights about ways to analyze and solve the many people challenges that come your way.

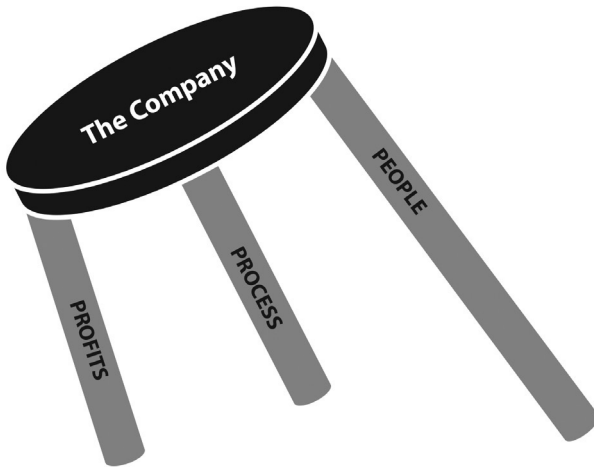
First, a brief note about the focus of this book. The following figure represents my view of what organizations are all about:



There are three key elements, the three Ps, in any company. They are:

- **Process:** This is all about the work or products that an organization creates. What you make and how you make it and all the various tools, techniques and manufacturing or creative methods are included here. A focus on continuous improvement is critical to ensure that you can produce what your clients are interested in better and faster.
- **Profits:** This has to do with all the accounting and financial wizardry that goes into ensuring the economic viability of any enterprise. Hopefully, the result is profits. Understanding and managing costs has to be the responsibility of everyone in your organization, and as a leader you need to ensure that the “economic literacy” of your workforce reflects a solid understanding of how your company does business and makes money.
- **People:** A leader I know often says, “We do everything we can to hire the best possible employees, but human beings keep showing up instead.” This is a wonderful way of saying that as leaders we must navigate our way through all the people-

related issues that are inherent in any company. As a matter of fact, when things blow up regarding profits and process, it is often the result of human error, that people thing. You might say this is a better representation of what can happen in organizations:



Now the stool is unbalanced. But I intended that. People issues can upset the whole team or company. So the focus of this book is the people things. I've always made sure not to attempt to give advice on areas that I don't have deep expertise in, so I leave the process and profits consulting to others.

Peter Drucker was one of the most profound and prolific writers about leadership over the last 100 years. The following quotation of his is on the back of my business card: "Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things."

The distinction between leadership and management is very important, and the title of this book, *Discover the Joy of Leadership: A Practical Guide to Resolving Your Management Challenges*, reflects that. To me, leadership is exciting and daunting at the same time. A leader must look backward and learn from experience about what to do and not to do. A leader must also focus everyone on the present and ensure

that the team or organization is carefully aligned around the goals or plans for their business. They must also look ahead and ideate, think incrementally or think big, assess risk, decide and plan. The demand to focus on past, present and future simultaneously is a very tall order! But that's how leaders can succeed and make their mark on an organization or even an industry.

The challenge is “doing things.” The day-to-day work of managing, if not executed well, can crowd out the time and focus needed to be an effective leader. That is why, in addition to leadership, this book focuses on the following four management topics:

1. Making the best use of your **time**. In these days of infinite availability, where we are choked by the flow of texts and emails 24/7, it's easy to let time get away. Specific ideas and tools in these chapters will help you make better choices about the use of your time. If you can't get time under control, it's difficult to do any other management tasks well.
2. **Communicating** effectively on a consistent basis. The various elements of what I refer to as the “communication vibration” between the sender of a message and the person receiving it tend to get lost in this era of communicating primarily by email and texts or in poorly run meetings that waste time. The chapters about communication will help you understand how you can enhance the effectiveness of your messages.
3. Building better **relationships**. It's difficult to exert much influence over people we don't know well. When you haven't invested the time to get to know the people that matter within your organization and key thought leaders outside, you not only don't have a chance to develop trust with them but never learn much from them either. The readings in the relationship section will expand your thinking about the importance of relationship building and how to approach it.

4. Leading others through the inevitability of **change**. I don't know if this is the most disruptive era in the history of the world, but it often feels like that to me. Organizations change and morph almost continuously, and helping your team work through those changes is critical. You can't predict what will happen but you can get a good feel for how people react to change emotionally and psychologically. The chapters in this section will help you in that regard.

My pitch to my clients over the years has been that if I can help you improve your skills and knowledge on these management topics, you will be better prepared to lead. I hope you will find the section on leadership topics insightful and that the materials in this book will benefit you, your team and your organization and help you rediscover the Joy of Leadership. If you get stuck along the way, don't worry about it. I know a really good coach you can call.

LEADERSHIP

INTRO: THOUGHTS ON BEING A LEADER

I HAVE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE in my careers to have met and worked with some excellent leaders and I learned something different from each one. They all exhibited great focus, intentionality and drive in all that they did and they were all able to channel the energy and momentum they marshalled to move organizations toward a common goal. Warren Bennis, a professor at the University of Southern California who has written extensively about leadership, said it best: “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.” I have had opportunities to lead most of my life, from class president, business owner, chairman of my church congregation, the nation chief for Indian Princesses (I even had a headdress!) as well as various corporate leadership roles over the years. I’m a doer and a thinker and developed a reputation as somebody who made stuff happen. I admit I was not always the type of leader I wanted to be, but I developed my skills and style over the years and I helped many other people grow as leaders. It’s been a very rewarding career in that regard and here are my collected thoughts on being a leader for people beginning their management careers and those who are already in leadership positions:

1. You will never know where your time goes until you are disciplined about tracking it and making decisions based on the fact of where it actually goes, not just your assumptions. What gets measured gets managed!
2. Be selfish about how you use your time so it is good for you, your team and your organization—in that order. Be appropriately selfish and be fully present when you are

- with someone.
3. Talk about goals and performance metrics constantly in an aspirational manner. Keep people motivated and aligned by setting the right tone. Keep everyone's "eyes on the prize."
 4. Take time to give feedback as soon as practical, shaping performance as you go. Don't wait for the annual performance appraisal. Recognize improvement and offer constructive suggestions as needed. Plan what you are going to say and listen to how others respond.
 5. Be brave and ask for feedback. Accept feedback graciously and choose something you want to focus on to improve. Share your goals and solicit feedback along the way to shape your behavior. Seek candid lessons learned from all key projects or initiatives so you can do things better next time.
 6. Stop doing something all the time. Consistently reevaluate what everyone is doing so that you can unclutter your work life. Do this regularly, at least once a quarter. Aim to eliminate enough things to save a modest two hours per week.
 7. Take time to network within your organization and outside with thought leaders and key practitioners. This keeps people aware of what you're doing and also enhances your value to the organization based on the insights that you bring in.
 8. Take the time to build relationships. Find out what's going on in other people's worlds and offer any assistance you can. Focus on how you can possibly assist them first. Learn to solicit input and ideas and ensure you're seeking the best solution and not just defending yours.
 9. Learn how the change process works, anticipate the concerns of your staff and be prepared to communicate consistently.

Make change a learning experience and keep the dialogue going throughout. Consider:

- What exactly is going to change and how to state that unambiguously?
- What will really be different and who will be affected by what?
- Who might perceive the change as a loss of some sort? Losses hurt.

10. Build trust by being reliable and dependable, offering candid and constructive feedback when asked for it and maintaining confidential information when it is shared with you.

Many people have the idea that a leader sits at the top of the corporate or organizational pyramid. From here they issue orders, directions, suggestions and ideas that flow down throughout the rest of the pyramid. Their subordinates implement those ideas, as well as their own, and action moves on down the line to the lowest level supervisor. But I think that model needs to be stood on its head. What I am talking about is the concept of a servant leader, where leaders are at the bottom of the inverted pyramid and their job, in addition to setting direction, is to ensure that each layer above them in this inverted pyramid gets what it needs to ultimately serve the client or customer. I shared this in a meeting I was facilitating for the owner of a business, and the next day he came back to me and said that idea completely changed his view of his role. He said in many regards it was actually liberating for him to focus his energies on being of service to his team, allowing them to serve their customer better.

I do not have a specific model that I can share with you or my clients about the very best way to be a leader. I don't think that one exists. There are so many leadership books that come out every year from folks who have achieved remarkable individual feats, led major

corporate successes or simply shared the stories of how they and their teams rose to the occasion to accomplish heroic or groundbreaking performances. Many of these can be inspiring, but you may never find yourself in a similar crucible of dynamic opportunity to achieve similar outcomes. However, there are still many elements of what leadership is all about that are common to any enterprise, regardless of its significance or potential impact. I think the following Celtic blessing is the finest aspirational description of what a leader should be:

For A Leader

May you have the grace and wisdom
To act kindly, learning
To distinguish between what is
Personal and what is not.
May you be hospitable to criticism.
May you never put yourself at the center of things.
May you act not from arrogance but out of service.
May you work on yourself,
Building up and refining the ways of your mind.
May those who work for you know
You see and respect them.
May you learn to cultivate the art of presence
In order to engage with those who meet you.
When someone fails or disappoints you,
May the graciousness with which you engage
Be their stairway to renewal and refinement.
May you treasure the gifts of the mind
Through reading and creative thinking
So that you continue as a servant of the frontier
Where the new will draw its enrichment from the old,
And you never become a functionary.
May you know the wisdom of deep listening,
The healing of wholesome words,

The encouragement of the appreciative gaze,
The decorum of held dignity,
The springtime edge of the bleak question.
May you have a mind that loves frontiers
So that you can evoke the bright fields
That lie beyond the view of the regular eye.
May you have good friends
To mirror your blind spots.
May leadership be for you
A true adventure of growth.

(From John O'Donohue. *To Bless This Space Between Us*.
New York, NY: Doubleday, 2008, pp. 151-153.)

I encourage you to read this poem several times and reflect on the depth of its messages and the challenges it provides for us all. This book's various selections on leadership will provide you a lot of ideas and insights that you can use to shape your own personal view and model of what works. Nothing that I have written will even come close to the eloquence of O'Donohue's blessing. Set a goal for yourself to be the best leader you can be. Be clear on the fact that the servant leader only knows about their effectiveness based on the feedback they get from those they serve.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do
more and become more, you are a leader.*

—John Quincy Adams

WHAT IS YOUR “WHY?” HOW PURPOSE SHOULD SHAPE YOUR ACTIONS

Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends, there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence and honest purpose as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing.

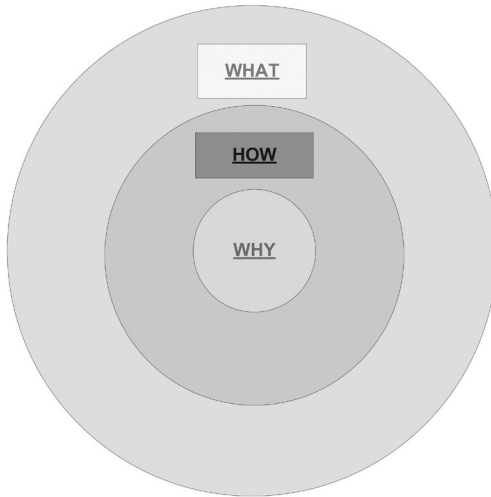
—THOMAS A. EDISON

APPLE ASKED SUPPLIERS of the iPhone 6 and 6Plus to produce 80 million units by the end of 2014. Pre-orders for China accounted for 20 million.

How can Apple continue to succeed like this? By designing elegant products that are feature-laden and easy to use. What does Apple do so well? It creates and manufactures great computers and phones. But why is the world lining up for Apple products? Because it has consistently challenged the status quo and dared to think differently about what it produces for its customers. And this sense of purpose is critical to how we all should look at our work.

I was recently referred to a TED Talk by Simon Sinek called “Start with Why.”¹ He laid out the case for what leaders should be focused on and asked the questions about Apple mentioned above. The bull’s-eye of Sinek’s model is WHY, and WHY is the key leadership focus for everything leaders should do.

Sinek made a distinction that resonated with me. He said leaders often have organizational power and authority and rely on those levers of power to drive the HOW and WHAT that get accomplished. But those who lead inspire us to follow them because we buy into the WHY they share with us. We want to follow them because of what WHY means for us, not them.



Sinek also stated that Martin Luther King, Jr., did not say he had a plan; but that he had a dream; and that is what people wanted to follow. They may have admired his speeches or his nonviolent approach, but his followers also wanted to live the dream, live in a country where everyone is treated fairly, regardless of the color of their skin. He challenged the status quo to create a new WHY.

But leading change requires that you reinforce the WHY and what's in it for everyone. The third part of Ken Follett's Century Trilogy, *The Edge of Eternity*,² covers the southern Freedom Riders, the followers of Dr. King, in 1961–62. The book is historical fiction but it shows how leaders must consistently reinforce the WHY and be relentless about it. The Freedom Riders were brave and determined people, but most important, they understood the reasons behind the causes they believed in.

Sinek's TED Talk made me think about my leadership experiences and the challenges I see with many of my clients. I led several key organizational changes in my career and in the two companies I have owned. I often spent time focused on the HOW and the WHAT and failed to leverage the WHY to gain support and build on the WHY as we progressed. The WHY is the purpose, cause or belief that creates

the impetus for doing something. It can't be just to make more money or gain market share. Our purpose has to challenge us beyond that.

Instead of focusing on WHY, I relied on my organizational power and authority to sell changes and make the implementation as smooth and flawless as possible. I was probably afraid of objections that might crop up about the initiative after we began implementation and avoided having to defend the WHY for the changes I was leading.

A company I work with was conducting a leadership review of its portfolio companies. The purpose for these investments is to add talent, systems, expertise and support to help the companies realize their promise in their markets. Ultimately they will be sold to other firms that can build on their success. Each company has a well thought-out path to value (PTV) to help it focus on exploiting its promise. There was a scramble to get the current PTV for each company accurately stated for the review. Now, things change all the time in the marketplace, but the PTV affects each company's WHY and HOW. It struck me that a lack of clarity can be an issue for everyone involved in grooming these companies for success.

I realize that often work may not seem significant enough to warrant a reinforcement of its WHY. But I also believe leaders can lead effectively only when they align their teams to a path to value, a purpose or just a learning experience they can rally around.

Ask yourself:

- What is my WHY? What is my purpose or cause for doing what I do?
- Have I reinforced this to my team and updated my own path to value?
- Do I hide behind my HOW and WHAT instead of reinforcing my WHY?

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



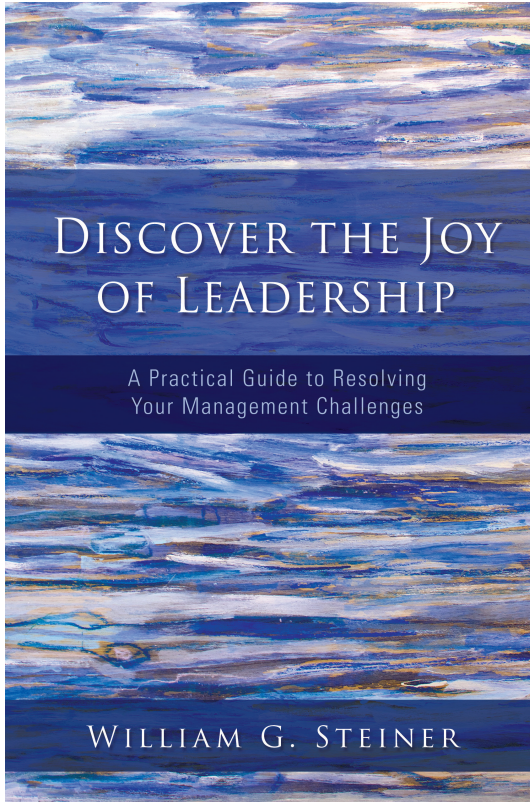
WILLIAM G. STEINER is the President of Executive Coaching Concepts, a consulting firm dedicated to assisting senior executives in taking their individual and organizational performance “TO THE NEXT LEVEL.” He has provided valuable counsel to senior executives throughout his career. Willy estimates that his 350-plus coaching clients in North America, Europe and Asia, in over 50 companies, have provided him a broad range of experiences that enhance his perspectives greatly. In addition, he has led hundreds more clients in seminars, presentations and speaking engagements, both in his corporate stops and in his teaching and community work.

Willy has assisted in meeting diverse organizational challenges, such as complex international mergers and divestitures, blending of distinct organizational and national cultures, and supporting growth in international markets. Willy fine-tuned his skills in leading organizational change, building high-performing teams and devising innovative incentive systems with General Electric, RCA Corp. and Galileo International. He has assisted executives in driving change by creating urgency, focus and alignment, with a keen eye for the communications implications and insights into the relationships that need to be sustained and cultivated along the way.

In addition, Willy was the President of SEI, a wholesale distributor of consumer electronics and appliances throughout the Midwest. He has a broad range of international experience and is very interested in leadership in global organizations. He holds an undergraduate degree in Economics and an MBA in Industrial Relations, both from Indiana University.

Willy is the proud father of three grown children who are successfully making their way in the world. He lives in Evanston, Illinois, just a few blocks from Lake Michigan. He is an avid golfer, storyteller, walker and reader, and he loves to travel. He writes a leadership blog every other week on his website, www.executivecoachingconcepts.com. He is active in his church and leads a monthly effort with a homeless mission. He recently took up scuba diving and is eager to explore the depths.

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