



SUMMIT REVIEWS

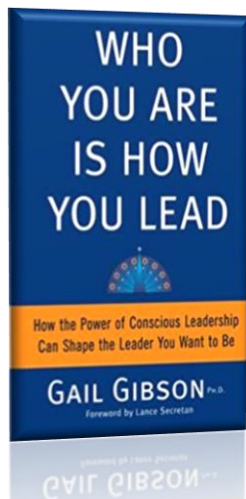
EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES



October 2019

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IN FOCUS THIS WEEK



By Gail Gibson

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WHO YOU ARE IS HOW YOU LEAD

How the power of Conscious Leadership Can Shape the Leader You Want to Be

Summary in Brief

As a leader, you may be asking yourself, how do I positively affect my organization? How can I create authentic lasting change? Where does this change come from? The answer is...it comes from you!

So often, leadership development is focused on gaining skill sets that enable leaders to manage the performance of others. But the truth is, you can't change anyone but yourself. Effective leadership starts with the idea that the change you are seeking, starts with you. Your leadership impact will be far greater if your focus and attention turns to developing yourself first.

'Who you are is how you lead' by Gail Gibson, taps into the idea that conscious leadership has the power to transform you into the leader you want to be. Taking you from where you are now to where

you are striving to be. Conscious leadership stems from the idea that in order to change, one must first become aware. When leaders begin to pay attention to their awareness, they will begin to realize they have a choice and are no longer a victim of circumstances. This choice enables leaders to take personal responsibility for their actions. These qualities of awareness, choice, and personal responsibility are what eventually lead to personal change and transformation within the leader. This is the heart of conscious leadership.

When conscious leadership invades an organization, the results are organizational effectiveness and growing others. Real lasting change begins with a change in you!

“The most important understanding about leadership is knowing “who you are...that effective leadership resides in YOU”



△ THE CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP MODEL

The conscious leadership model visually demonstrates the correlation between awareness, choice, personal responsibility, change, and courage and trust. When a leader consciously develops these qualities, the result is growing people and organizational leadership. Essentially, the leader must be the change they want to see in an organization, hence, who you are is how you lead. Conscious self-development will ultimately lead to the result you desire.



“Conscious leadership is the most natural way to inspire employee engagement, the heart of performance, productivity, and morale.”



“Organizations desperately need leaders who are more authentic and consciously aware...true leaders who touch lives and add deeper value to the world.”



THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

AWARENESS

Awareness is understandably the first step in the conscious leadership model. The more you understand yourself as a leader, the more effective your leadership will become. Gail describes that most leaders are in auto-pilot. Can you recall a time where you drove yourself home from somewhere but cannot remember the drive? This is how most leaders are going through the day. They are unaware of their influence in the organization. Followers are looking to the leader for how they respond and how they react. A conscious leader is one that realizes that they are not a victim of circumstances but that they have a choice. Without becoming self-aware of how certain situations stir up feelings in you

“Simply being aware isn’t being fully conscious. Awareness without action is pointless. You must also have the intention to resolve issues or do something differently”

and how your response to people (whether good or bad) will affect others, you will not be able to recognize those opportunities to exercise choice. Self-awareness is personal power.

CHOICE

Joy, sadness, guilt, relief, fear, satisfaction are all choices we make. The way we feel and the way we respond are choices; however, they are subconscious choices we make. As a leader grows in awareness, these choices become more and more conscious. When people in an organization feel like they do not have a choice,

helplessness and despair will creep in. It is a conscious leader’s responsibility to demonstrate positive choices in everyday conversations and situations.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The conscious leader will strive to ensure that there is a focus on personal responsibility in the organization. It is the leader’s duty to demonstrate personal responsibility in decisions and everyday interactions.

These interactions and everyday demonstrations of personal responsibility that will usher in a positive, empowering, and motivating workplace climate. One of the most influential qualities of a dysfunctional team, is a lack of personal and collective responsibility. Leaders who take personal responsibility for their actions also expect but not demand this of their followers. It is essential that leaders extend trust but then demonstrate the collective commitment to this change; responsibility must be paired with accountability.

“Blame and finger pointing doesn’t solve anything, in fact, they create fear, a lack of trust and unhealthy environments that crush both creativity and productivity.”

CHANGE

Change is inevitable, and the reality is that most people do not enjoy change. One of the biggest jobs of a leader is to institute organization change, which is effectively translating the organization’s vision into results. Managing change is less concerned with implementing more policies and procedures and more about paying

“Choice is the ultimate power...we create our realities with the choices we make”



“Leadership is primarily about developing individuals to be the best they can be and not about implementing more systems.”



“What these individuals have done is focused on changing themselves, and in doing so, people and relationships have changed around them. It is absolute proof that leadership starts from the inside out.”



“Trust generates results with less cost to the organization.”

conscious attention to people and the impact of that change on the working environment. Learning to manage personal change is the first step. If a leader can learn to manage their own personal change they will be better equipped to help others handle organizational change. Authentic and sustainable change is the result of conscious people growing individually and learning how to manage change. Change happens with the individual, one-by-one. Effective leaders will work one-on-one with individuals during a time of change and demonstrate how to handle change. Helping people handle change will not only be effective for the current change but also for any future changes in the organization.

COURAGE AND TRUST

Courage and trust form the base of the model because nothing happens without first having the courage to act or without trust in yourself or others. The biggest hindrance to courage as leaders is the desire to seek approval and acceptance from others. These desires, while not necessarily bad, hinder a leader’s ability to be their authentic self, thereby hindering the leader’s ability to remain true to personal

convictions and to be courageous and confident. It takes courage to be your authentic self in every little interaction day after day. Trust on the other hand, is not required to start change, but it will breathe life into the change. Trust in others and self-trust will change everything. People who feel trusted will be more engaged will strive towards improvement. Trust in yourself will also breed self-confidence, which others view as a strength in character. Followers are more likely to trust a leader with a strong character who exhibits self-confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

While not demonstrated visually in the conscious leadership model, spirituality in leadership is an important quality that gives strength to the model. Spirituality is defined by Gibson not as an internal belief system that grounds a person internally and guides decisions. To become truly conscious and discover one’s true self, the leader must determine what their belief system is and let it guide you. People are increasingly expressing the desire to more wholly integrated. People no longer want to compartmentalize their world but bring together their personal and work. This shift in society requires that we develop our human characteristics along with our spiritual essence; developing our whole person.



“Courage is the starting point for all personal change.”

“You are not victims of this world, you are its co-creator.”



GROWING YOURSELF FIRST

1. CONNECTION TO YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

This strategy requires slowing down and catching yourself when you start to feel stressed. We are usually more productive when we slow down than when we try to take on too much. Common practices for slowing down include reducing the amount of “plates” you are juggling, meditation, and journaling. Journaling can be a great way to slow your thoughts and reflect on your personal change and journey to conscious leadership

Sample Reflective Questions when Journaling:

- What do you think of the life you are creating?
- What does your ideal life include? What matters most to you?
- What is the legacy that you would most like to be remembered for?
- When do you feel most energetic and full of life? What is it about this time that brings you alive?
- What’s going on around you and how are you influencing that?

2. AWARENESS

The “Story” Impact on Yourself

Are we aware of the story we are telling ourselves? We are often conscious of the story we tell others about ourselves but less conscious of the story we feed ourselves. You tell yourself a story about every interaction with other person. This is your interpretation of what happened in an interaction. If growing yourself is the priority, then awareness needs to be brought to these interactions. Your goal as a leader is to acknowledge that your story will be different than someone else’s and to let go of your story when necessary and find middle ground to avoid conflict.

Pay Attention to Your Thinking

Another way that you can practice awareness is through paying attention to your thinking. If how you perceive the world dictates your reality, then thoughts are the building blocks of

your current reality and attention must be paid to how you are painting the world around you. By simply changing the way you think can change your life.

Tips for Shifting Your Thinking:

- Come back to the moment
- Take the time to check in with how you feel
- Observe your intense emotions, ask yourself “where is this coming from?”
- Stay connected to present circumstances
- Choose to re-think thoughts and paint them in a more positive light

Challenge your Biases, Mental Models, Filters, and Assumptions

Our biases, mental model, filters, and assumptions are like the lenses in the glasses we wear when we look at the world around us. Everyone has them, yet few are aware of what they are and how they affect the way they see things. It’s a leader’s job to learn to question your assumptions and change them if they are not inline with reality.

3. RESOURCES

Sometimes despite our best efforts, we are blind to certain areas of ourselves. The best way to bring awareness to this blind spot is to seek feedback from superiors, colleagues, and direct reports. In order to fully utilize feedback, you must be open to criticism and explore opportunities for improvement.

“feedback is one of the tools in your kit that contributes to developing your full potential. Feedback promotes awareness, that vital step towards making a different choice and away from our typical reflex reaction.”

Guidelines for receiving feedback:

- Approach feedback as a learning opportunity
- Focus on what is being said, listen carefully and ask for examples
- Do your best not to defend or justify your behaviour

To grow yourself, you must know yourself.

John C. Maxwell

“Your greatest goal is to fulfill your own potential, and in doing so, inspire others to realize theirs.”

– Gail Gibson



HOW TO

Build Courage and Trust

- Become familiar with the behaviours that engender trust
- Honour your commitments
- Be consistent in your words and actions
- Trust yourself enough to give other people enough latitude to grow and do their jobs
- Whenever you have a choice...shift from doubt to trust and from fear to courage

Increase your personal responsibility

Be responsible for:

- Your every thought, action, and deed
- Your response or reaction to any situation
- Your part or contribution in any situation; do not blame any part of your life on outside circumstances
- Asking yourself what you can do to assist or support with the situation
- How your life is unfolding, your own happiness, your success
- Co-creating your life
- The changes you want to make
- Allowing for more of your authentic self to emerge

Embrace Personal Change

- Choose to do something differently, then do it!
- Engage a colleague or hire a coach to support you
- Enjoy and appreciate your progress

Build Awareness Around Choice

- Choose to hold open the moment between stimulus and response and be consciously aware of the choice you could make (picture holding open)
- Choose how you want to lead in the moment. When you are with an employee, what could you do to make it special and have your employee leave feeling empowered, appreciated, and confident? Do you choose to see the inherent value of the human being?
- Choose not to tell someone what to do. Create the space to explore, be curious, and ask questions instead
- Choose to practice the values you stand for
- Choose to focus on the positive, the strengths and what's already working in your office
- Choose to take the high road

“You can shift your thinking, and therefore your feelings, in minutes.”



CRITICAL EVALUATION



RECOMMENDATIONS

Browse

www.ppreciativeinquiry.case.edu/

www.beingfirst.com

www.creatorschoice.com

Watch

Celebrate what's right with the world by DeWitt Jones

<https://starthrower.com/products/celebrate-whats-right-with-the-world-dewitt-jones>

The Fish Philosophy by Chart House Learning

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ChartHouseLearning>

Read

Covey, S.M.R. (2006). *The speed of trust: The one thing that changes everything*. New York: Free Press.

Secretan, L. (2006). *One: The art and practice of conscious leadership*. Caledon, Ontario, Canada: The Secretan Centre.

Zander, R. & B. (2000). *The art of possibility: Transforming professional and personal life*. New York: Penguin Books.

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Gibson, G. (2009). *Who you are is how you lead: How the power of conscious leadership can shape the leader you want to be*. Toronto: LIA Publishing.

Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

While Gail Gibson's book "Who You Are is How You Lead" is a relatively short read, it is packed full of excellent leadership strategies and insights. The book is aimed at enabling leaders to become the leader they desire to become. While someone aspiring to become a leader could read this book, this book would be most applicable for readers who already operate in a leadership role.

The concept of conscious leadership underpins the entire concept of the book and forms the core of the conscious leadership model. This concept is presented with a visual model that makes the whole process simple to understand. Gibson expands on each of the components of the model in her book and uses easy-to-relate-to situations and examples. At the end of the book, she provides a "how to" section to aid in developing each of the components of conscious leadership; however, these are simply a list of questions to ask yourself and points to consider, rather than practical exercises. Other criticisms about the book would be that she presents a lot of absolute statements about leadership and the statements and most of these ideas lack support, in either examples or sources. As a leadership model in general, this model is by essence leader focused. Gibson identifies traits that will be developed as a result of conscious leadership such as emotional intelligence, personal responsibility, self-awareness, self-confidence, and increased sociability. This is arguably very similar to the Trait Approach.

According to Northouse (2019), a leader in the Trait Approach, demonstrates the following traits, "intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability. Similar to the Trait Approach, Gibson's model fall prey to the same criticisms.

According to Northouse (2019) individuals, "who possess certain traits that make them leaders in one situation may not be leaders in another situation." While becoming a more conscious leader and growing yourself as a person are great aspirations, this strategy may not be effective in the long run. Northouse (2019) makes the argument that situations often influence leadership, not solely the traits of the leader. There was also no mention of how the conscious leadership model could and to what extent it could affectively develop an individual's followership.

Even though Gibson's book does elicit questions as to effectiveness of the exclusive use of the model, especially long term, I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to develop themselves as a leader. While not a fully comprehensive book on leadership, it provides a very clear insight in the value of conscious leadership. Gibson's message in "Who You Are is How You Lead" is a simple but powerful one...be the change you want to see in your organization.

