



About the Author

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Steve Radcliffe is one of Europe's top leadership experts. In the last 20 years, he has provided leadership coaching to over 50 CEO's and heads of civil service. He is most well known for his powerful leadership development approach, Future – Engage – Deliver, that The London Times describes as 'the no-nonsense approach.... shaking up the world of leadership'. Steve has designed and delivered leadership development, people engagement and culture-change programmes that have impacted tens of thousands of people in organisations of all kinds and on all continents. Steve is also an inspiring conference speaker having given a TED Talk.

Leadership — Plain and Simple

By Steve Radcliffe

Executive Book Summary by Geoff Mathew Varughese

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Summary of the Book

Steve Radcliffe begins his book by stating that the 'Leadership' he refers to is not one that comes from position or title. He wants us to be aware that he is aiming for us to be at our best, in touch with what we care and doing something about it. He wants us to know that the fundamentals of leadership are the same, whether we are at our first job or we head an organization and he wants we explore these fundamentals together. He assures us he'll help us learn about the leader we are, the leader we want to be and how to get there even if we don't see ourselves as leaders yet.

"This leadership stuff really needn't be complicated. I believe that leading is a natural, human activity that is a part of all of us. You don't need a certain IQ or job title to be a leader". (Radcliffe, p. 2)

"The only three leadership practices you'll ever need
FUTURE—ENGAGE—DELIVER"
(Radcliffe, 2012)



Chapter 1

Future—Engage—Deliver

Radcliffe starts his book by talking about how he has been seduced into thinking that leadership is really complicated and mysterious. He asserts that this ‘leadership stuff’ needn’t be as complicated as it’s made out to be. He assures us that we will see that we have what it takes to be an effective leader. The three ingredients that work as a catalyst for leaders are Future-Engage-Deliver. He tells us, these three aspects of leading will help us succeed whether it’s to organize a birthday party, create a team, or build a society that prospers.

Leading starts in the FUTURE

The book tells us that leading begins with ideas and thoughts about the Future, about how we would like things to be, where we’d like to get to or what we’d like to build.

“Powerful and effective leaders are guided by the Future they want. And more than this, the leader is strongest when that Future is powerfully connected to what he or she cares about.”(Radcliffe, 2012)

The more the commitment for the desired future, the more they will persist, the more energy they’ll bring along, the more they’ll stay. When a leader has this powerful relationship to the Future they care about, it has an extraordinary impact on others.

‘ENGAGE others’ to create the Future you want

Interact with others in a way that has them wanting to build the Future with you. Engagement is central to a leader’s ability to build alignment, involvement, ownership, unity and team. Importantly, it is different from ‘communicating to’, ‘presenting at’, or ‘telling to’.

“I am staggered that so many leaders still appear to believe that, in order to get the best from others, it’s enough for them simply to ‘transmit’ their ideas or wishes. It isn’t.”(Radcliffe, 2012)

Engaging others is a two-way interaction and its something that happens inside your relationships. People need to be engaged in you and the Future you want to create. This requires integrity, openness and consistency.

DELIVER—Make things happen

This is where words like performance, execution implementation and results come in. Leading ends with getting the best out of yourself and others in order to deliver results. You start with ideas about the Future, you Engage with others to build it with you, and encourage and support them to deliver the results. If you are really being a leader, the others you have engaged will make most of it happen.

Future

How strong is the sense of future ?

Is there a sense of possibility of achievement?

Is there a feeling of optimism and hope?

Engage

Are people engaged and want to contribute?

Do they feel valued & involved?

Is the culture to ‘tell’ or to ‘engage’ ?

Deliver

Are you strong at delivering ?

Are conversations robust or just ‘go along’ ?

Are people helped to develop to increase delivery ?

Chapter 2

How to Turbo-Charge your Growth

Radcliffe mentions how some leaders grow in confidence and ability faster, and what approach can be adopted to achieve this pace. He goes on to add that some practices make a difference straight away and that we have to practise being the leader we want to be more often in more situations. He has identified three ways to turbo-charge our growth...

Conscious Practice

Improving as a leader is no different than improving at many walks of life, the more you practise the better you get. Conscious practice accelerates learning and you are consciously using situations and challenges as opportunities to grow.

You will be conscious of how you want to be as a leader ahead of meetings, conversations and challenges, you will be aware of what's happening while you're in those situations and then you will extract learning afterwards and even ask for feedback to learn more.

Pause And Think

a. How clear are you that you have opportunities every day to practise being a leader?

b. How regularly have you been grabbing those opportunities?

c. What specific opportunities are coming up for conscious practice of your leadership?

Support Team

Ultimately, your leading is completely down to you. Don't try to grow fast as a leader without a personal support team. To accelerate growth as a leader, you identify specific ways to grow; tell selected colleagues about the plan and to rate you in these areas; and then ask them if they'll watch out and

for you because you'd like to talk to them about the progress you're making. Another major reason to have a support team is to deal with moments of setbacks and doubts. With the help of a team we can talk stuff through, get things back into perspective, and get ourselves back on track.

Pause And Think

a. Do you have people you talk with who can get help you get yourself back in shape?

b. Who would you like on your support team who isn't currently there?

c. What request will you make of people on your support team?

Turbo-Charge Growth

1. **Make your practice Conscious Practice.**
2. **Build your personal Support Team.**
3. **Know and Go beyond your limits.**

Go beyond your limits

There are two ways to grow as a leader. One is to build your leadership muscles with the help of Conscious Practice and your Support Team. The other is to notice and then reduce the ways in which you limit yourself. There are two major ways people limit themselves as leaders:

Limit One: Not Believing You're a Leader

A considerable number of managers in leadership programmes don't have the buzz or spark you expect from a leader simply because most of them don't see themselves as leaders. They have been too used to 'accepted wisdoms' about leadership which goes from, 'leaders are different from me' and 'leaders are older people in senior positions' to 'leaders are special' and 'leadership is a solitary journey' which are in a true sense, a load of rubbish. If you have such limiting beliefs around your leadership, then simply notice them and go beyond them. Leading is a natural activity that's part of all of us. We just need to develop it through practice.

Limit One: Not Being in Leader Mode

Thousands of leaders have lost sight of themselves and slipped back into manager/operator mode. This is one of the reasons many organizations perform way below what's possible. While the tendency to go into manager mode is the feeling of comfort and competency derived from knowing that this mode has been the reason for our success to date, many organizations are also responsible for this tendency by pressuring employees to go into manager mode and review the past and present rather than going into leader mode and focusing on the future.

Chapter 3

Future—Engage—Deliver

Leading always starts in the future with ideas about what you'd like to see in the future. In this chapter Radcliffe tells us about how to ensure our leadership foundations are in place. He encourages us to answer three fundamental questions about leadership and highlights specific practices that we can use to build our future leadership muscles. He also helps us identify how we limit ourselves in the Future aspect of leadership.

Question 1 - What do you care about?

Asking yourself what matters to you, what's important to you, what you value most or what you have most passion for, is where leadership starts. There are a different aspects of our life that we may think about, but this exercise is about tapping into our energy of passion, pride and possibility. He tells us that we may get in touch with this energy faster if we talk out aloud to someone. When we are able to answer this question and feel energised, it prepares us to answer the next question to further develop our leadership.

Question 2 - What do you want to lead for?

Linking 'what you care about' to what is real, tangible and specific to actually make happen in the future we want, is the key to this question. We need to think about what do you want to lead for in terms of our organization, our colleagues, our customers and anywhere else where we can make a difference. Being a leader is already a part of us and we all have a leader mode. The focus is on growing faster as a leader to make difference to what matters to us now.

Question 3 - Who is the leader you want to be?

On our journey as a leader we will have setbacks and disappointments that knock our energy and confidence which may lead us to believe that our limiting beliefs are true. Pausing to look at back what you're like at your best and being just who you want to be is the way to tackle these moments. There is no room for modesty or playing safe here. Picturing the future you want and being the best you want to be are ways to help uplift us and create more of the future we want while being the leader we want.



Practices to Build your Future Muscles

Be Guided by the Future you want :

Radcliffe talks about how we all often are busy viewing the present from the past whereas in leader mode we will be comparing where we are with where we want to be. Our ideas about the future give us a powerful lens to look at current reality. It helps us focus on what matters, what's working and what's missing that needs to be put in place.

Embrace the Big Picture, the Whole :

Radcliffe talks about how the leader is not always the brightest person in the team and that stepping back and taking a look at the bigger picture, the context, is what leaders do. Looking at the context lets effective leaders speak about not just 'what' is needed and 'when', but also 'why' it is needed at all.

Future : How we Limit Ourselves

Thinking from the Present: The pull of the present can be overwhelming and have us lose sight of the big picture and where we want to be. The key is to be conscious and ask ourselves, 'Am I being guided by the 'past' and 'present' or by the Future I want?

'I can't see how': The most common limiting factor in leadership is not taking things on because we don't know what lies ahead. The power of commitment while in leader mode makes you want to make things happen, and get on with it in even when you don't know how to.

Our Limiting Beliefs: Our doubts, fears and uncertainties seriously hold us back. These beliefs work against us flexing our future muscles. They make us believe we couldn't make it happen, so why try at all.

Chapter 4

Future—Engage—Deliver

In this chapter Radcliffe tells us about how Engage adds power to the Future aspect of leading, how Engage is different from Future and what are the key ingredients of effective engagement and what practices make us a significantly engaging leader. He wishes to highlight the magic of what's possible when people are engaged and not 'transmitted to', 'presented to', 'reported to', or 'told to'. This, he says, is how we add pace and velocity to what you're leading for.

'Engage' different from 'Future'

Radcliffe highlights that while 'Future' is about us and how we choose to be in leader mode and how we imagine the future, 'Engage' is about our impact on others, how we connect with them and impact their energy towards the 'future' that we see. The Engage aspect happens inside our relationships with others and the best results come when people choose to engage both in the Future you want to build together and in you.

Levels of Engagement

Resistance - Here, people don't want what you want and they will resist.

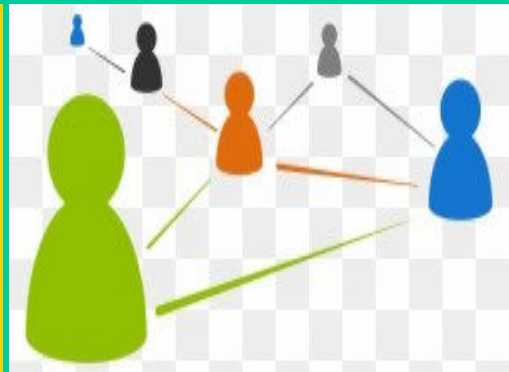
Apathy - Here, people don't care what you're up to.

Grudging compliance - Here, work is done grudgingly with dragging of feet.

Willing compliance - Here, people will take actions in line with the plan albeit with no enthusiasm.

Enrolled - Here, people choose to join you, want what you want.

Committed - Here, people bring their own energy because they care and really want what you want.



Results

Actions

Opportunities

Possibilities, Ideas

Relationships

Four Aspects of Engagement

Relationships:

Radcliffe emphasises that engagement happens in a particular kind of relationship. People need to feel valued by you, listened to by you, believe that you actively want them involved. They feel they are in a partnership with you and want to be part of a bigger relationship.

Possibilities, Ideas:

We need to create a sense of possibilities about the future, and ideas about how things could be. This sparks people's spirit energy and raises their sense of hope. We have to help people see possibilities for themselves and what they care about in what's being explored.

Opportunities, priorities:

People need to be engaged to keep their focus intact. This is possible by helping them connect with ideas that they see as tangible. Encouraging their input toward what they see as an opportunity also helps build a feeling of ownership.

Actions:

Leadership ends with 'Deliver' where possibilities get focused into opportunities and then results being delivered through focused actions. Efficient leaders make 'Big relationships' and 'Big Requests'.

Three 'Engage' Practices

Consciously practise 'Engaging' rather than 'transmitting/Communicating: Make a conscious effort to find opportunities to engage people. Get feedback from others if they feel you are engaging enough.

Consciously practise Building Big Relationships: Your influence and impact as a leader arrives via your relationships. Consciously build them big enough to get the job done.

Consciously Manage your 'Shadow of a Leader': Be clear on the impact you intend and get feedback on the impact actually felt. Each of us at different times shines light and casts the 'shadow of a leader'.

Chapter 5

Future—Engage—Deliver

In this chapter the focus is not on how well we deliver, it's how well we deliver through others. Radcliffe points us towards ideas and practices that can significantly increase our capacity to deliver in two regards. First, there are practices to help deliver more now and second, there are practices that help us build capacity in those around us to enable them to deliver more later.

Deliver Through Others

We all know how to get something done, to deliver. The first step is to ensure we are in the right mode. In leader mode our first thought is not 'what shall I do?', It's who do I want to engage and what is the request I want to make of them. We need to have a conscious practice of noticing whether our inclination is to do a job our self and then choose not to do it.

Deliver More Now

To excel in deliver, we must have done a great job in Future and Engage. If we don't see the levels of delivery we want from others, we need to think through what sort of job we've done in Future and Engage. We need to help people imagine a powerful sense of Future and Engage them in that Future. To excel in deliver, you have to mean it. It is easy for people to get distracted and it is vital that in such situations what we want delivered matters to us enough that it will help us lead powerfully in Deliver. We need to set high standards and have high expectations. We need to focus, others may be distracted

Deliver More Later

This is about growing our self and others' capabilities to deliver into the future. To excel in delivering more later, Radcliffe encourages us to Develop Others as Leaders. They need to be helped in distinguishing their Leader Mode from the Manager Mode and by helping them grow Leadership Muscles, and even helping them go beyond their Limiting Beliefs.

Putting it all into Practice

To deliver, you have to be acting and thinking in Leader Mode. That way, you'll be looking to Deliver Through Others. Ensure you've done a great job at the Future and Engage aspects of leading. And to really Deliver more now, you have to mean it. To deliver more later, develop those around you as leaders.

The Leader's Conversations for Delivery

It is through our conversation with people that we stimulate Delivery Through Others. It is here that we show up as a leader, engaging and meaning it. Radcliffe explains that while delivery of these conversations can be immensely complex, it's all about four conversations:

Conversation 1. Making Big requests: This is where you make the request for delivery. Ideally it is made in a way that has others engaged by the Future you want and leaves them wanting to deliver what's needed.

Conversation 2. Maximising Probability of Delivery: This is the ongoing conversation you have until the result is achieved. Its purpose is to maximise the probability of delivery.

Conversation 3. Delivery is Acknowledged: This is the conversation you have when what you want is delivered at the time and to the standard you'd like. Here is a major opportunity to build more capability to Deliver More Later.

Conversation 3a. Non-delivery is Addressed: This is the conversation you have when what you wanted has not been delivered or to the standard you'd like. It can require some Emotional Fortitude from you but it also provides another great opportunity to build more capability to Deliver More Later.

Conversation 4. The Wrap-up: Here is the wrap-up conversation when the job is eventually done.

Chapter 6

The Four Energies

In this chapter Radcliffe emphasizes the importance of not dwelling only on our intellect, but to engage people's emotions and spirit too. He quotes Drucker as saying *"Your first and foremost job as a leader is to manage your own energy, and help manage the energy of those around you."* He views people as a bundle of four energies that interact and feed off each other. Further, he highlights the role of energies in the Future, Deliver and Engage aspects of Leadership.

Intellectual Energy

Radcliffe says this is the energy that drives our analysis, logic, creativity, curiosity, and focus. He opines that this energy is needed for us to be organised but too much of it can suppress passion and enthusiasm.

Emotional Energy

Radcliffe defines this as the energy of human connections and relationships. He feels this the energy that binds a group and makes one feel included which in turn drives effective teamwork, partnership, alignment and collaboration.

Spirit Energy

This is the energy of vitality and being in touch with what we care about. Radcliffe says spirit energy is a crucial leadership energy because it brings hope and optimism to people and prepares them to build the future.

Physical Energy

This is the energy of action, making things happen and getting things done. The absence of this energy can be felt well when we lose sight of why we are doing something. We can ensure this energy with diet, exercise and sleep.

'Future' and The Energies

The central message of the Future aspect of leading is 'Keep your Spirit Energy alive'. You're at your best when you're in touch with what you care about and can see the Big Picture. You're guided by the Future you want and are fuelled by your Spirit Energy.

"When your spirit energy is up, you're alive with what's possible. It's easier to see the whole big picture. You can quickly connect with the 'why' you are doing something" (Radcliffe, p. 98)

Spirit energy in essence is about being connected with your purpose in life and the big picture.

'Engage' and The Energies

The Engage aspect of Leading is about 'helping manage the energy of those around you'. When we are engaging others our focus is on how others receive the message and what impact it has on their energies. Radcliffe specifies what energy corresponds to each step of the relationships to results pyramid.



The conclusion of the research is that any decision to lead has to include a commitment to enhance, through practice, our emotional breadth as well as our ability to relate to others' emotions." (Pearce, 2003)

'Deliver' and The Energies

To be an effective leader in Deliver, you have to manage all your energies and the energies of people around you every day. Deliver requires more than a good intellectual plan and targets. To Deliver effectively, Energies needed in the Future and Engage aspects of leading need to be brought together.

One of the worst aspects of some business studies courses is the assumption that business people are rational fools, devoid of emotion or any sense of responsibility. I have know such people. We should not encourage them." (Handy, 1998)

Chapter 7

Be At Your Best, More of the Time

In this chapter Radcliffe states that our ultimate goal is to simply be at our best, more of the time. He believes this theory is at the centre of this 'Leadership Stuff'. He says Being At Your Best also shows up in your energies. You are more inclined to connect emotionally with others, your thinking is sharper and you have the Physical Energy to make things happen. When we are at our best, leadership flows naturally and we are powerfully in touch with the Future we want and not held back by the Present.

Holds You Back

Fear
Doubts
Uncertainties
Limiting Beliefs



Takes You Forward

What you care about
What you value
What's important
What you want to see

The Overview

Radcliffe defines us as a walking bundle of factors including feelings, beliefs and energies. These consist of what takes you forward in life and has you At Your Best. It's the connection that you have to what you care about, what's important to you and what you're committed to. These factors give you determination, persistence, resilience and staying power. At the same time, within you are doubts, fears and uncertainties which take you away from being your best and tell you you're not good enough. Radcliffe looks into how the grip of these factors that hold you back can be loosened.

"First is to be aware in any moment of who you're being and whether it's who you want to be. And the second is to choose who you want to be. It's as simple - but sometimes, not as easy - as that" (Radcliffe, p. 108)

Conscious Practice along with steps to take:

'At Your Best' versus 'Just Surviving'

We each have two different modes which make us feel good or trigger us. The key is to heighten our self-awareness and ascertain what we're like.

'Your Impact Intended and Impact Felt'

We need to think about the light or shadow that we cast on people around us. We can ask our Support team to describe us and our impact on them.

'Your Triggers'

We all have triggers that stop us from being our best. We need to consciously notice these triggers and be on the look out to stop them from impacting us or getting triggered in the first place.

'Your Costs'

Evaluating the costs of going into 'Just Surviving' mode is key as the cost of one interaction in this mode can undo a lot of good work.

'How You Benefit'

There are benefits of the 'Just Surviving' mode but the question is, does the perceived benefit outweigh the costs of setting back relationships and holding back being a leader.

'Getting back to Being At Your Best'

The key is to be better at quickly getting out of Just Surviving mode and back to being At Your Best. Practice seeing the Bigger Picture and putting things into perspective.

'Practising Being At Your Best, More of the Time'

The best way ahead is to prepare ahead of time. Picture moments that triggered you and picture yourself At Your Best in those scenarios. Be clear on how you would respond if triggered again.

The wise leader knows what is happening by being aware of what is happening here and now. This is more potent than wandering off into various theories. By staying present and aware of what is happening, the leader can do less yet achieve more." (Heider, 2005)

Chapter 8

Future—Engage—Deliver and Teams

In this chapter Radcliffe highlights what's missing in the Future-Engage-Deliver aspect in teams and wants to help us identify what practices we can take on to achieve our potential:

- ^Do way too little Future and Engage
- ^Leave lots of Emotional and Spirit Energy untapped and unused.
- ^Have too many members in Manager Mode, and so are left trying to lots of deliver without properly preparing the ground.

Finding the initial spark

Radcliffe says this is the one ingredient he looks for first when he meets a team. The spark that ignites a strong sense of team members being committed to a Future and engaged with each other.

“Keep away from people who belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great” (Mark Twain)

‘Future’ and Teams

Radcliffe states that the first job for a team is to find a common ground among the members to find the future that they want to build together.

“To give up a bird I hand, a company must see a dozen birds in the bush. The future must become just as vivid and real as the present and the past. Senior management must help the organization build an intellectually compelling and emotionally enticing view of the future.” (Hamel and Prasad, 1993)

‘Engage’ and Teams

It's in the Engage aspect that you ensure its in a together way. This space is also the weakest space where team members will let each other down because they tend to expend intellectual and physical energies without concentrating on the Emotional and Spirit Energies.

“The true high-performance team is rare. This is largely because a high degree of personal commitment to one another differentiates people on high-performance teams from people on other teams.” (Katzenbach and Smith, 2003)

‘Deliver’ and Teams

In this space regardless of your role in the team, ensure you are choosing the mode you are in. And when you choose to be in Leader Mode, be a Leader of the Whole. You will tend to see success from a teams perspective and encourage others to use the same prism.

“Great Groups continue to struggle until the project is brought to a successful conclusion. Great curiosity and problem solving ability are not enough. There must also be continuous focus on the task until the work is done.” (Bennis, 1997)

“We Are Up To Something Together”

In the Future - Engage - Deliver framework teams are at their best and they have a strong sense of We Are Up To Something Together. And in this stems from the thought process where;

Future is where the ‘Something’ is co-invented

Engage is where the ‘Together’ is cemented

Deliver is where the ‘Something’ is made real through working ‘Together’.

Chapter 9

Future—Engage—Deliver and Organizations

In this chapter Radcliffe emphasizes that organizations need to excel by developing and encouraging leadership at all levels. He clarifies that organization in this context is anything bigger than a team. The goal is to have large groups of people work together and individually to lift performance as a whole. The key is to bring out the best from everyone to help an organization perform closer to its potential - Everyone is the CEO of something.

Led by the top team

Radcliffe proposes that the fastest way forward starts by having a top team be brilliant at practising FED. The assumption is, there is a top team aligned together and up to something. This can be tricky as members of a team at the top all have aspirations of being the leader. The top team in an organization should grasp the opportunity to not only envisage the future they want but also the culture that'll be needed to get there. Each member of this top team will be a walking example of this culture, including being an ambassador who will energise and bring in others to build the future.

Not led from the top

Radcliffe states that if visible leadership is not present, we start somewhere else. When working with big organizations the key is to go in with Energy. That is, there will always be some people more urgently and ready to dive into the leadership space. We need to support them in lighting a fire and helping it spread.

Questions to be asked...

What would it look like if you started more fires?

Who else could well be ready to join you?

How much does the leadership of your organization matter to you?

How could you be influencing it more than you already do?

“By the time we reach puberty, the world has shaped us to a greater extent than we realize. Our family, friends, and society in general have told us how to be. But people begin to become leaders the moment they decide for themselves how to be.” (Bennis, 1997)

Critical Evaluation

Steve Radcliffe has given us an insight into his ground breaking theory on leadership, Future Engage Deliver. He tries to convey to us through real life experiences the importance of looking to the future and engaging others around to look with us and finally to deliver that future which was envisioned. The experiences with his clients along with his own experiences give us a first hand view of how leaders had wrong priorities and ideas of their own vision even. The book is as simple as it is effective in helping us realize that leadership isn't complicated and as the name suggests is plain and simple if you have your vision at the right place. His emphasis on the theory being accessible and useful for every individual irrespective of their position encourages people across the board. The risk of being called out for stating the obvious that we may have thought about is negated by the fact that he claims we may be practising many of the theories he is proposing already. The numerous anecdotes and FED in Practice columns add credibility and interest in the book.

References

Radcliffe, S, (2012). Leadership: Plain and simple. Pearson

