



Ethical Leadership Annotated Bibliography Summer, 2010

We at Ethical Leaders in Action like books. The list below describes some that we particularly like, and which we have used in our leadership program. All opinions expressed are those of the ELA staff.

Texts on Leadership, *per se*

- **Jim Collins, *Good to Great*.** While most people seem to remember the images of “getting the right people on the bus” or the story of the hedgehog, Collins’s discussion of “level 5 leaders” is compelling and interesting.
- **Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art*.** Short, sweet, and insightful, this collection of essays amounts to a free-form interpretation of the concepts of Servant Leadership first outlined by Robert Greenleaf. DePree best contributes to the conversation with specific examples and a rich articulation of his own exceedingly humanistic view of leading an enterprise.
- **Bill George, *True North*.** While still a very personal account, Bill George offers more framework than does Max DePree or Robert Greenleaf, other authors advocating a humane and humble approach to leadership. George’s distinctive concept is Authenticity, which describes the inner place from which a leader can truly and sustainably enable others to succeed.
- **Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.** This is the classic, written by a veteran of the large corporate executive ranks to articulate and advocate an alternative to hierarchical, ego-driven leadership.
- **Peter Koestenbaum, *Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness*.** Based in philosophy and the humanities, this work presents a powerful framework for identifying and honing the skills and dispositions of leadership. Koestenbaum’s central concept is the Leadership Diamond, with four points – *vision, ethics, courage, and reality* - representing strategies for skills development in support of the central *will to greatness*.
- **Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel, *Moral Intelligence: Enhancing Business Performance and Leadership Success*.** These authors, successful leadership development consultants and coaches, lay out a framework for building on strengths and shoring up weaknesses related to moral reasoning and decision-making. While the some of the social science methods underlying this work has been challenged by some of our clients, the overall approach has real value for those who favor a systematic approach to self-improvement.
- **Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*.** Reading around the historical references and shameless self-promotion, we find wisdom in Machiavelli’s timeless advice concerning politics and

management – how to obtain and maintain power. It is also worth recalling that Machiavelli holds that the end justifies the means – his most famous quote - only if the end is itself just. In Machiavelli's terms, just ends are those which benefit society.

- **Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*.** Master Sun offered a great deal of advice, and leaders can learn most by reflecting on his observations on the critical nature of preparedness, and the need for ongoing situational awareness. This book is part of the business folk culture, which also raises questions about strengths and weaknesses of the business/war metaphor.

Books that address other skills or perspectives related to ethical leadership:

- **Tom Beauchamp, Norman Bowie, and Denis Arnold; *Ethical Theory and Business*.** This is a terribly dense business ethics text, laden with arguments both theoretical and practical. Students object to that density, but admit that the content therein, especially the specific discussions of ethical topics, make it worth the effort for those who want a comprehensive understanding of business ethics for managers and business leaders.
- **Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soul Craft: an Inquiry into the Value of Work*.** Crawford earned a Ph.D. in political philosophy from the University of Chicago. He was leading a prestigious think-tank, until he stopped doing that, and became a motorcycle mechanic instead. This book challenges our social belief that “knowledge work” is different in kind from work that involves our hands as well as our minds. Along the way, Crawford's many sharp and relevant ideas can help us re-cast how we find and make meaning in the work that we do.
- **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity*.** The author (I won't re-type his name here) is known as a key researcher on the phenomenon of “Flow,” which we experience when we are truly functioning at our highest levels, smoothly and without cognitive interference. He applies this same approach and perspective to the complex phenomenon of creativity, interviewing over 100 extremely creative people and offering the rest of us useful observations and concrete advice.
- **Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink and Outliers*.** In *Blink*, Gladwell explores the experience of knowing and acting from the gut, detailing the power and limitations of expert, seemingly-instinctive decisions. It offers leaders outstanding insight for leaders on when and why we should - and when we ought not - trust our instincts.

Outliers examines the phenomenon of the exceptional performer, debunking our popular myths about the primacy of individual talent and moxie. It appears that many other factors contribute

to exceptional performance, as well. One chapter of particular interest to leaders concerns airline crashes, and the role of “mitigated communication,” when subordinates do not candidly and forcefully express critical views in the face of impending disaster.

- **Barbara Minto, *The Pyramid Principle, Logic in Writing and Thinking*.** This book is a cult classic among consultants, written by the first female partner at McKinsey and Company. It earned that reputation by being an absolutely practical, useful primer in how to conceive and communicate business ideas logically and clearly. It is out of print but available used.
- **Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*.** This classic work presents an approach for building and leading organizations that learn and improve over time. It amounts to an alternative model for management that reflects the knowledge, rather than industrial, age.
- **Robert Sutton, *The No Asshole Rule*.** The author defines assholes as those who diminish or demean those with less status or power, what we might also think of as bullying. He does a great job of describing bad behavior and its corrosive effects on an organization. He does an even better job encouraging us to curb our own asshole instincts and never to tolerate those behaviors in others.

“Non-Business” Books with Strong Leadership Themes

- **Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*.** Many have argued that Lincoln serves as a canvas on which we render the virtues to which we aspire. Goodwin paints a very human, very realistic picture of the man, from which we learn great lessons on the power of emotional intelligence, political judgment, and courage.
- **Alfred Lansing, *Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage to the Antarctic*.** In 1914, Earnest Shackleton led an expedition seeking to traverse the Antarctic continent by dogsled. Their craft, the *Endurance*, became icebound and was ultimately crushed. Shackleton then led his team of explorers, scientists, technicians, and sailors through an astonishing self-rescue across pack ice and open ocean. Lansing’s history, first published in 1959, remains a gripping account of extraordinary leadership and humanity at the extremes of endurance.
- **Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*.** Leopold was a conservationist and scholar who lived and worked in the Sand Counties of Central Wisconsin, and at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. This book, published posthumously in 1949, grants the patient reader a remarkable journey. Our contemporary environmental debate is often about what we ought to do or must

do. This book inspires us to care about why, and to more fully appreciate the natural world and our place in it.

- **Norman MacLean, *Young Men and Fire*.** This book contains a compelling account of the Mann Gulch forest fire disaster of 1949, and a somewhat more ponderous story of the author's investigation and reflections on that catastrophe. Fourteen young smoke jumpers were killed when many failures of leadership and execution tragically converged. Strong themes emerge from the discussion, including vision and leadership, and the challenge of communicating, and leading from vision.
- **John Niehardt, *Black Elk Speaks*.** In 1932, Niehardt and Ben Black Elk interviewed the latter man's father Ogalala Lakota medicine man and elder Black Elk. The resulting book has been regarded, not without controversy, as a central work of history, anthropology, and theology. Our readers found remarkable insight into ways of encountering the world that are geographically close, and philosophically distant, from our own.
- **Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea*.** A powerful, historical account of the sinking of the Whaleship Essex and subsequent travails of her crew, who set out in three open whaleboats to traverse the vast Pacific. The text reveals the pros and cons of different leadership styles, and especially underscores the ways in which our prejudices can negatively influence our decisions. It is also an extraordinary story, exceedingly well-told.
- **Studs Terkel, *Working*.** Terkel, a venerable journalist and political radical, interviewed hundreds of people from all walks of life in the nature of and meaning of work. The work consists of excerpts from those interviews and framing essays by the author. By that description, this work may not sound promising, but it is fabulous.

And finally, the following texts are of particular interests to leaders in fire service and law enforcement:

- **Kevin Gilmartin, *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*.** This book has been touted as the emotional equivalent of a bullet-proof vest, and with good reason. As I have ridden along with and interviewed cops at all levels, Gilmartin's truths resonate with all.
- **Karl Klockar, *The Idea of Police*.** This short book looks at the tradition, history, and philosophical foundations of law enforcement. The book shows its age, using the characters of *Hill Street Blues* to illustrate the virtues and pitfalls of professional cops, but Klockar's discussion is as relevant today as it was 25 years ago.

- **Norman MacLean, *Young Men and Fire***, see above. The book is especially poignant and relevant for fire service leaders, but has lessons for all.
- **Michael Perry, *Population 485***. This extremely personal essay captures the very personal dimensions of paid, on call firefighting and rescue in a small community. The prose is intimate and striking, touching on themes of life and death well beyond the incident scenes.
- **John Salka, *First In, Last Out, Leadership Lessons from the New York Fire Department***. While the insights aren't earth-shattering, Salka's credentials as an FDNY battalion chief and veteran of the 9/11 response and ongoing "overhaul" lend credibility to some solid ideas about strategic and tactical leadership.

Many of the foregoing books have been topics of the Hill Leadership Working Group. Learn more about that group at ethics.jjhill.org.

"What a long, strange trip it's been...." – "Truckin'", by the Grateful Dead