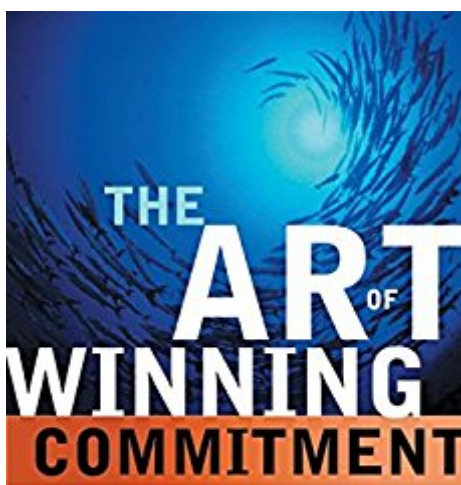


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Art Of Winning Commitment: 10 Ways Leaders Can Engage Minds, Hearts, And Spirits



10 Ways Leaders Can Engage Minds, Hearts, and Spirits

Dick Richards



Synopsis

Leadership books most often cite interviews with high-profile business executives while offering do-and-don't case studies of different corporate initiatives in action. But some of the world's most extraordinary leaders work their magic outside the world of business. Their ability to gain the enthusiastic commitment of their people -- when something other, and perhaps greater, than profit is at stake -- demonstrates a fundamental human connection that their counterparts in the corporate sector would do well to emulate. *The Art of Winning Commitment* presents the unique perspectives of a diverse group of leaders that includes: educators* religious and spiritual leaders* heads of not-for-profit social services* an orchestra conductor* a professional storyteller. Readers will also learn leadership secrets from former Philadelphia 76ers' executive Pat Croce, former Chief of the Cherokee Nation Wilma Mankiller, and politician and retired U.S. Army General Wesley Clark, and others. In the search for commitment, loyalty, and business excellence, leaders can learn a lot from those outside of the business definition of leadership.

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Customer Reviews

I had always viewed myself as a pretty successful leader, but the insights I gained from reading this

book have caused me to step back and review aspects of my leadership style that have evolved over a 25 year period. This excellent book calls on leaders to honestly assess the way they lead and communicate with their people in areas that for some are in uncharted waters - i.e., the emotional and spiritual dimensions. The book is not only insightful but is written so clearly and simply that its messages are very easy to grasp. I recommend this book for any leader who wants to raise her or his performance to the next level.

So much business literature is mind-numbingly and illogically recursive, suggesting that breakthroughs for your business will stem from imitating the techniques of other business people. In a departure from this tired and arguably broken premise, consultant and coach Dick Richards provides lessons from leaders operating outside of corporations: in not-for-profits, the arts, sports, religion, education, government... In drawing insights from his interviews with these leaders, Richards argues that leaders succeed by securing follower commitment. He posits that this happens when leaders work on, if not master, ten competencies in four interrelated domains: political, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (defined as, "the sense of a calling from some source larger than one's self"). When a leader's capabilities coalesce in these four main areas of competence, she becomes, in essence, a fuller, richer human being. As a result, others positively respond to the improved leader by choosing to invest more of themselves in pursuing the leader's mission. ~~~ Familiar but..., Soft but... ~~~ In this framework, Richards proffers a cogent, integrated way of *thinking* about your own leadership. Drawing on historical and personal anecdotes, quoting philosophers, researchers and leaders, Richards both echoes and transcends conventional business literature (including the recent spate championing "emotional intelligence"). It would be fair to argue that there is little new here. But that would be off the mark. As Dick Richards himself candidly points out, there is more than plenty of literature and seminars traversing the broad, overly worn leadership field. Fortunately, the intriguing whole that Richards has woven is more than the amalgam of its recognizable threads. Likewise, it would be patently unfair (to both reader and author) to dismiss this thoughtful, occasionally lyrical work as too soft, too philosophical, or too New Age-y. By moving past the sterile Insert Tab-A into Slot-B mentality that underpins so much prescriptive management literature, Richards elevates his readers, helping them to transcend the heartless transactional world so many work in. (Still, while there's more than a modicum of practicum in the book, readers probably will want more guidance on how to translate the principles into action. Perhaps Richards is at work on a "field guide.") Dick Richards proudly writes, as his title suggests, of the *Art* of leading. One senses that Richards thinks as an artist, a world-savvy poet reflecting on

leadership. One could mistake the book for a wizened corporate shaman's love letter to meaning-starved managers. ~~~ Bottom Line ~~~ Dick Richards' *THE ART OF WINNING COMMITMENT* is more gestalt than how-to, more fresh synthesis of the known than breakthrough. It should ignite your little gray cells, kindle your interest in self-development, inflame your own commitment to fostering commitment in your colleagues. And help you become a better person in the process. Don Blohowiak, Lead Well[®] Institute; editor, *The Leader's Letter*

To be an effective leader, one must inspire a broad and deep genuine commitment to a team's mission, vision, desired results, and members. A number of books have been written on ways to get people to sign on, to agree, to perform. Applying the principles they promote will generate performance, adherence, and a certain degree of loyalty. Full commitment is a different issue. Richards presents an approach that is balanced between intellectual commitment, emotional commitment, and spiritual commitment. Emphasizing the art of leadership, he shows how leaders can craft deeper relationships that generate genuine commitment to produce meaningful achievement and fulfilling satisfaction. In the area of intellectual commitment, four chapters present the elements of insight, vision, storytelling, and mobilizing. Under emotional commitment, the chapters address self-awareness, emotional engagement, and fostering hope. Rendering significance, enacting beliefs, and centering build the understanding of spiritual commitment. The wrap-up chapter is titled *Towering Conclusions and Further Strategies*. A brief list of resources (interviewees and websites) and an index complement the text. Each chapter concludes with a handful of questions to stimulate contemplation. The entire text stimulates contemplation. Using a wide range of people and their experiences and philosophies, Richards engages the reader in an introspective and educational journey. In chapter after chapter, I found myself inspired and enlightened, motivated to apply what I was learning in my work. You will find this book to be a sort of combination of a walk in the woods, a comfortable soak in a hot tub, and time in a classroom with an energetic professor scribbling concepts rapidly across a white board while his writing hand struggles to keep up with his mind. Plan on reading this book twice; you won't get it all the first time. Margaret Thatcher's quote will help you understand that opportunity.

We enjoy well organized books that get to the point: this is one of them. In a nutshell, the work, based on interviews with leaders, offers practical wisdom and highlights 10 essential competencies of effective leaders: 1) seeing what is, in a new way; 2) vision; 3) storytelling (conveying a compelling message); 4) fostering hope (creating a sense of the possible through optimism); 5)

rendering significance (connecting vision with each person's life goals); 6) mobilizing (encouraging right actions, setting high expectations, letting go, encouraging the best in others); 7) self awareness; 8) emotional engagement (empathic connection); 9) enacting beliefs; and 10) centering (developing centering consciousness and improvising). These highlights don't do justice to the book. In its content-rich pages, it delivers an abundance of insights about the meaning of leadership, as well as revealing an inspiring spirit.

This book gave me the next steps to what I needed to make winning commitments. I knew all the analytical information to promote myself and business but I was lacking a way to engage the heart and spirits of my prospect. This book has helped me move in that direction.

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