

Foreword by David Gergen With a foreword by Warren Bennis

# TAKE THE LEAD



Motivate, Inspire, and Bring  
Out the Best in Yourself and  
Everyone Around You

BETSY MYERS

## Take the Lead

*Betsy Myers, John David Mann (With), David Gergen (Foreword)*

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**Take the Lead** Betsy Myers , John David Mann (With) , David Gergen (Foreword)

“Why is it that some people challenge us and motivate us to rise to our best abilities, while others seem to drain our energy and spirit? What is that particular quality certain people have that causes those around them to engage fully and feel connected?”

You are a leader. You do not need to be in a boardroom, on a battlefield, or on a ballot to have a profound impact on everyone around you. In this life-changing book, Betsy Myers—senior adviser to two US presidents and former executive director of Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership—demonstrates how each of us has opportunities to *take the lead* every day and shares seven core principles that will enable us to be more productive, engaged, and successful.

From the Oval Office to the playground, cabinet meetings to kitchen tables, in public life and private, Betsy Myers has seen firsthand the emergence of a new leadership model where having all the answers up front is less important than asking the right questions, where strength is derived less from the power you wield than from how you make the people around you feel.

With personal stories from her time in government, in academia, and on the campaign trail, as well as her experiences as a wife, daughter, and mother, Myers helps all of us learn to set the right priorities for ourselves; to connect on a deeper level with the people around us; to uncover problems early when they are still easy to fix; to collaborate with those whose points of view are different from our own; and to push through our fears and live our most authentic lives. Myers demonstrates that more than simply making people *feel* good, this kind of leadership can have a profound effect on the results achieved: it is how initiatives are launched, profits are made, and work gets done.

Personal, practical, and profoundly inspiring, *Take the Lead* is a book for anyone who wonders where all the great leaders have gone. Betsy Myers helps us see that true leadership is all around us—and *within* us.

## Take the Lead Details

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## **Gergen (Foreword)**

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## From Reader Review Take the Lead for online ebook

### Penny Ronning says

Do you love a book that you never want to end?!

THIS IS THAT BOOK!

I've read countless leadership books and most seem to just repeat what their mentor or someone that inspired them said in a slightly different format, but, in the end, it's really just the same stuff you read before. Not this book!

Betsy Myers brings an entirely new perspective to leadership that is so simple and yet so profound. Her lifelong love for the study of what makes a leader great has taken her professionally from her own business in southern California to being a senior official in the White House to Harvard's Center for Public Leadership to being the COO of a winning presidential campaign to ultimately one of her most important positions, a parent and to her daughter's first grade classroom.

Betsy's belief that leadership starts with ourselves is powerfully demonstrated when she shares a conversation she had with one of her daughter's elementary school teachers. The teacher had just shared with Betsy that she (the teacher) didn't see herself as a leader. To which Betsy responds: "Are you kidding?"..."You're teaching all these children how to read and write, how to share and other important life skills. They are growing and developing their sense of self-worth, and you are right in the middle of that process, teaching them how to learn and nurture their own abilities. You're leading them into their future!"

Betsy's ability to bring out the most productive feelings in those around her carries through into each page of her book and brings about those same feelings in her readers.

BUY THIS BOOK TODAY! IT'S OUTSTANDING! And be sure to get copies for your team, colleagues, staff, etc. -- I have no doubt you will see a rise in productivity. Take the Lead

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### April says

I really wanted to read and like this book, but I couldn't get past the authors politics. Too bad, because if she had just written the book from a neutral point I think it would have appealed to a lot more people.

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### Betsy Myers says

In my book, **TAKE THE LEAD: Motivate, Inspire and Bring Out the Best in Yourself and Everyone Around You**, I share personal stories from my time in government, in academia, and on the campaign trail, as well as my experiences as a wife, daughter, and mother. I hope to help you learn to set the right priorities; to connect on a deeper level with the people around you; to uncover problems early when they are still easy

to fix; to collaborate with those whose points of view are different from our own; and to push through our fears and live our most authentic lives.

I hope you find my book personal, practical, and inspiring. True leadership is all around us—and within us.

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### **Bombon says**

There were some really good points and stories. I'm glad I listened to it but I found all the election/political talk quite boring.

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### **Beverlee Jobrack says**

It all seems to come down to being a decent human being, being humble and treating people with respect. The last chapter on courage is affirming. I love citing one of my favorite quotes: Eleanor Roosevelt's quote: "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

When I'm afraid, I repeat in my head, "you must do the thing you think you cannot do."

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### **Jane says**

A must read for anyone who works on any level. Your influence goes far beyond your imagination. Practical wisdom for teachers , parents, leaders in the workplace

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### **Usha says**

The sole reason for picking this book and continuing to read (despite losing interest) while stalling the more captivating "Leadership isn't for cowards": written by a woman in the very sparsely populated world of women in leadership roles. Its always refreshing to get a perspective from the 'other-side' than the usual norm.

A few pages in, and frankly, it wasn't striking a personal chord. However the stories in there were interesting and well told. That much is true - Betsy is a great story teller, transforming simple day-to-day actions even with a child into leadership stories! But it was hard to see a coherent line through them and transitions from one story/section to the other were not enough to hold interest.

The 7 factors laid out towards good leadership, all ran the central theme of "a good leader is one who brings out positive feelings in others and hence increased productivity". That is one unique take you wouldn't see in other leadership books since its coming from a woman. Feelings are a dismissed word in men's dictionaries! To hear about genuinely taking note of how people feel from a person in a leadership role is very assuring, so

to say.

At the end, it was more of a read for political anecdotes, than for insights into leadership - which was the purpose of the book.

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### **Dave B. says**

Taking the Lead is a wonderfully light and refreshing business leadership book from Betsy Myers that shares her life experiences in a way that supports here seven qualities of good leadership. These qualities are: Authenticity, Connection, Respect, Clarity, Collaboration, Learning and Courage. These aspects are not new to modern day leadership thought so the reader should not expect to gain new insight or a revelation rather add a different perspective on leadership qualities from Ms. Myers. And, the reader will gain a better sense of context as a leader in Washington politics. My favorite chapter was on Clarity where I gained a new perspective on clarifying my own goals and objectives in addition to clear communications of organizational goals and objectives to others. I adopted a “clear desk workday start” and stating my top priorities philosophy for work from the author.

I recommend ‘Take the Lead’ was a reminder to existing leaders that we retain our human factors as we progress forward in our careers. This is a reminder to understand ourselves first then bring that real self-aware person forward to build real relationships with peers and subordinates. My only fault with this book was the author’s lack of development as a leader. As far as I can tell the book is written from the perspective of top leadership. The book misses points on developing internal leadership and pushing that quality up the corporate food chain. Ultimately, I give this book 3 out of 5 stars.

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### **Bea Elwood says**

This was still fun to read even though I don't think it was what I was expecting from the cover promise to "motivate, inspire and bring out the best in yourself and everyone around you". Some good suggestions but why do we have to recap chapters with little redundant lists at the end? I literally just finished reading it. The personal stories and behind the scene political stuff was the most interesting bits.

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### **FiNominal Chandra says**

Through sharing her motivational leadership theories and experiences, Mrs. Betsy Myers reinforced many of the leadership techniques that I believe in, as well as introduced a few new ideas on how to improve my strategy as a leader. I highly recommend this book to anyone in a leadership position who might want to broaden their outlook and abilities. One of the nicest things about this book is that the techniques she tries to convey only require your own personal effort, nothing complicated to carryout or understand, very simple and to the point. If more people followed these leadership tactics, we would see growth and collaboration at a highly efficient and more effective rate.

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## **Delaney says**

In *Take the Lead*, Betsy Myers presents three core beliefs about effective modern leadership: 1) Effective leadership starts with leading yourself, and therefore self-knowledge and self-reflection are foundational skills for a great leader; 2) Leadership isn't about having all of the answers, instead, it's about asking the right questions and collaborating effectively with others; and 3) Great leadership is driven by how you make the people around you feel.

Betsy builds out these core beliefs with a mix of academic research on leadership and personal stories from her own family and epic professional experience (from her time in the Clinton administration, Obama campaign, as ED of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard, and other professional experiences). There is no fluff in this book--the content is succinct, clear, applicable, readable and relatable. I particularly love that at the end of each chapter, Betsy includes a list of questions to inspire the reader's own self-reflection on what they've just read, making it easier to apply what they've learned while underscoring Betsy's belief that self-reflection is key to great leadership.

I also love that Betsy includes stories of true learning, in which she made mistakes, worked through difficult relationships, and even got fired. It's inspiring for someone of her caliber and achievement to show that she's not perfect either, and that leadership is a skill to be practised and improved throughout one's life.

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## **Meg says**

Out of many books that I read regarding leadership, this one I actually thought was relatively well done. Written by woman-nice addition to the typically male dominated world-it didn't give an entirely different viewpoint but there were some unique pieces.

Some of the information is known, if you have read other books or just have a relatively decent amount of common sense, but this book gave great examples and had great stories of people that she interacted with to display those ideas. I did feel that it was slightly politically biased, but she did eventually end up discussing some Republicans in a positive light as well. The author had a great deal of experience to draw upon, although I do feel that some of the memories may have been colored with time and repurposing for this book. Example, could a five-year-old really be that astute? It seemed a bit coincidence, particularly the instances with her daughter.

But the book did give a better idea of what it really takes these days to make a leader. Times have changed, people/the work force has changed, and so should the way we lead and are led. There were key points and information. It is not solely or people in higher positions in corporations or politic, it can be used to focus on any performance that needs improvement.

I did lend/recommend the book to someone.

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## **Shawn says**

I loved the premise of Betsy Myers' book *Take the Lead: Motivate, Inspire, and Bring Out the Best in*

Yourself and Everyone Around You - regardless of your position in the work force, or in life, you can be a leader. It's such a simply concept which usually goes overlooked. Most people believe that they need the title of Manager to be a leader and that couldn't be further from the truth. After reading the synopsis of "Take the Lead," I thought I was in for an enlightening and insightful read - boy was I disappointed. Each chapter focuses on a particular value (Clarity, Courage, Respect, Authenticity, etc) but the stories and anecdotes were almost entirely about politics and the time Myers spent involved with the Clinton and Obama campaigns. I was expecting relatable, interesting applications of these values and was instead treated to endless ramblings about political campaigns (which has no real application in my life). I'd also love to know how much Warren Bennis was paid for writing the afterword. He commends Myers for her natural storytelling and abilities to connect with her audience. Did we read the same book?!

I wanted to give Take the Lead a 1 star review but, having read The Chalk Man earlier this year, NOTHING will ever be as bad as that. 1 star out of 5, rounded up to 2 stars, because nothing can compete with hate for The Chalk Man (my review).

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### **Angie says**

Was this a leadership book? It felt more like a "my experiences with campaigns and federal agencies." Not a bad book, but it did not feel like a leadership book to me. There were some mentions of how some successful businesses treat their employees well, which I suppose is a component of leadership.

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### **Roberta says**

Betsy is an amazing story teller. The anecdotes in the books are well chosen for each chapter. Highly recommend it.

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