Tribal Leadership

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"*Tribal Leadership* gives amazingly insightful perspective on how people interact and succeed. I learned about myself and learned lessons I will carry with me and reflect on for the rest of my life."
—John W. Fanning, Founding Chairman and CEO napster Inc.

"An unusually nuanced view of high-performance cultures."
 —*Inc.*

Within each corporation are anywhere from a few to hundreds of separate tribes. In *Tribal Leadership*, Dave Logan, John King, and Halee Fischer-Wright demonstrate how these tribes develop—and show you how to assess them and lead them to maximize productivity and growth. A business management book like no other, *Tribal Leadership* is an essential tool to help managers and business leaders take better control of their organizations by utilizing the unique characteristics of the tribes that exist within.

Tribal Leadership Details

Date   : Published (first published 2008)
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Genre   : Business, Leadership, Nonfiction, Management, Psychology

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From Reader Review Tribal Leadership for online ebook

Jay says

This book reminds me of Jim Collins book Good to Great in that both are presenting findings from lengthy research studies. While Collins book talked more about their underlying methodology, Tribal Leadership shows five cultural levels and describes the transition from one to the next. Briefly, the five statges are:

1. Life sucks
2. My life sucks
3. I'm great
4. We're great
5. Life is great

As tribes (groups of 20 to 150 people) improve culturally through the five levels, vallues change and a noble cause for the organization is found. The discussion about how tribes can get stuck in the interaction between stages 2 and 3 was interesting and explains why there are so few organizations at the hiher levels.

The big aha moment for me in this book was the discussion of developing three person relationships (triads) and how this can be vastly more effective for an organization than the 1:1 relationships found at lower levels.

My recommendation: read this book, share it with others, and tell them I said so.

Erika RS says

I want to give this book 5 stars on content and 2 stars on presentation. Every time I worked on reading this book, I got something valuable out of it. Oftentimes, something I could apply that very day. But the whole time I read it, I was vaguely bored.

I think that this is because, while the content is valuable, the book itself is quite repetitive. I feel it could have been half the length (or even less) and contained all of the same content. And a good fraction of that reduction could have come from just not using the word "tribal" as a descriptor all the time. At some point, just assume the audience knows you mean "tribal leader" when you talk about a leader.

All that said, I do expect to reference this book often. The key insight -- that groups have different levels and that those levels can be detected and change through choice of language -- is a good one, and the authors present many practical tips for upgrading a group's culture.

Qasim Zeeshan says

Awesome, well researched and "based on real stories" book with tips to formulate teams to achieve a goal that's beneficial for everyone. Highly recommended in the start of a career.

Maria says

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Ali Sohani says

An excellent book on a leadership, draws heavily from a research, the 5 stages for cultural transformation:

Stage 1 - "Life Sucks" - pathological, gang-like, angry.
Stage 2 - "My Life Sucks" - a mix of learned helplessness, bitterness.
Stage 3 - "I'm Great" (and you're not) - Productive and dynamic but egocentric.
Stage 4 - "We're Great" (and they're not) - tribe-oriented, creative, productive, tight.
Stage 5 - "Life Is Great" - Big-picture, tribe-connecting.

"Change the language in the tribe, and you have changed the tribe itself."

Stage 1 runs the show in criminal clusters, like gangs and prisons, where the theme is "life stinks," and people act out in despairingly hostile ways.

Stage 2, the dominant culture in 25 percent of workplace tribes, says, in effect, "my life stinks," and the mood is a cluster of apathetic victims.

In Stage 3, the dominant culture in half of U.S. workplace tribes, the theme is "I'm great" or, more fully, "I'm great, and you're not."

Stage 4 represents 22 percent of tribal cultures, where the theme is "we're great," and another group isn't.

Stage 5 is the culture of 2 percent of the workforce tribes, where the theme is "life is great" and focuses on realizing potential by making history.

More on:
http://www.triballeadership.net/media...

Marcus says

I would have never read this book had it not been for the free audio version I found through Zappos.com. I was't looking for yet another business book, much less a management book, but this one really surprised me and hit me hard. The book in a nutshell talks about 5 stages that organizations and the members of organizations go through:

1 - Life sucks.
2 - My life sucks (but maybe there's something better).
3 - I'm in it for me.
4 - We're in it as a group with a core set of values; there is a higher purpose. We're great.
5 - Our values are everything. We're not fighting competition, we're fighting for a cause.

Admittedly, this list sounds pretty straightforward, possibly even obvious, but reading the examples of what kind of thoughts people in each of the five stages think was like having my mind read. It became clear to me what stage I've been in (3) and what stage my company is in (mostly 3, possibly occasionally dipping into 4).

It's one thing to find out exactly where you are, it's another thing altogether to know exactly where you could go next and have a good idea how to get there. This book gave as clear an indication of that as I've ever seen. I feel like after having read this it will be much easier to recognize the next "stage" when I see it and to consciously move in that direction. Great read, and since the audio is free and relatively short (6 hours), there's really no reason not to give it a try.

Erika says

While I'm not a manager, nor do I foresee a career in becoming a "tribal leader coach" anytime soon, if you're a leader of any group of people, you may find this book useful. You'll find it especially useful if you already recognise the power of a tribe or have the need to leverage a groups' already existing talents.

I picked up this book because I teach middle school, a natural environment for tribes and cliques, and figured I might gain insight into how to manage their day-to-day. Instead, I gained insight into several of my own situations, as I've worked for a number of organisations (as a freelance artist and teacher) and this book was able to provide sudden insight into why certain workplace situations seemed to work better for me than others.

For example, this is what I understood from the analogy: If you exit school enthusiastic and ambitious, you may be entering the workforce while operating as a "3" - ambitious but maybe a little self serving, as personal achievement is a prime focus in school - and if you enter the workforce in an office of "2's" - people who have already seen the duplicitous nature of the game and either gave up or stopped caring in order to cope - you eventually adapt to your situation by also reducing your ambition (and optimism) to blend in to the existing environment or else rising to leadership status within the organisation. However, there may come a time when you realize that you want to find or build a tribe of "4's", a happy tribe intent and focused by a shared vision and values, and this book discusses those various situations with interviews from successful CEO's, actors (such as Gary Cole, who portrays a prototypical "3" boss on Office Space) and writers (like

Scott Adams, who capitalised on the "2" office culture in the Dilbert comic strip).

I always wondered why so many of my friends left college dreaming of changing the world only to emerge years later as jaded and miserable as the grown ups we swore we'd never be. While nothing in here can be considered a "quick fix," this book, by addressing the language and culture of our various environments, has at least made it all make a little more sense.

Katie says

This book, ironically, was required reading for a place I formally worked which I would classify as strongly "stage 2" or "stage 3."

I really enjoyed not only the material of this book, which seemed very well researched and applicable, but also the format. I thought there were perhaps a few too many examples, but in-general what information it had was what it needed. I don't really know how to summarize the book, but I would definitely recommend it for anyone who is a leader in an organization, or hopes to be a leader, and would suggest it'd be a good read for anyone. It was very eye-opening for me as I realized I'm barely halfway through the "stages" - "THIS ISN'T EVEN MY FINAL FORM!" ;)

Wiet Vande Velde says

Tribal leadership explains about an interesting phenomenon: the Level of thinking people are living in. As a leader, you want to understand the principles explained in this book. It will help you to understand why people say certain things. For me, an interesting read and a valuable lesson learned.

John Norman says

Read this if you have great performers in your company who think they're great, but also secrretly think others are not great . . . Such a company needs to evolve to understand how everyone in the "tribe" can say: "We're great."

The basic message here is compelling, but it is so involved in dubious philosophical / psychological claims about human development, I just can't give the book a very high rating.

Like a lot of self-help books, the rhetorical strategy starts from the assumption that you are a weak person who is doing it wrong (therefore, you need to read the book). That may be, but I think the core insights of the book could have been expressed in about 50 or 60 pages, without inventing a theory of developmental stages in the business world.

I now dread hearing colleagues describe someone else as "Stage 2" or "Stage 3" or "Stage 4": What could be more condescending than to toss people into reductive boxes like that?

Read with an open mind . . . but at your own risk.

Jessyca505 says

?????? 1/2 "[Don Beck] said, after hearing about the three stages of epiphany, "There's a word in the Bantu languages that [Archbishop Desmond] Tutu has used to help bring the entire country of South Africa together: ubuntu, meaning 'Today I share with you because tomorrow you share with me.'" The word can also be translated "I am because we are." ~ David Logan

I want to be part of a tribe! At stage four! I want to be inspired so that I can inspire!
David Logan visits many avenues that I have read in other books this year, but it is good to hear (read) them again and again so that I can learn deeper. It references Apple and Southwest Airlines (also mentioned in Simon Sinek's "Start With Why". It also references true tribal leadership, as in David Kelly at IDEO, and it took me down memory lane. I remember watching "The Deep Dive" with my Truman staff in 2009 and it helped move us to the Golden Years! Really thinking about innovation, and collaboration at a deep level and moving us down the continuum to a tribe.

The tribe made us move from an "F" rating in the district to a "B+" rating in the district. We had real student achievement and worked diligently and with purpose in using the data, modeling for our students, and going deeper in our professional learning.

I read these books to help lead me, point me, align my compass in a way that I can try to be as inspiring as my mentor was to me. At the end of the day, our students deserve a tribe. A tribe willing to work with them. I will continue down my journey until I "get it right".

In the meantime, here are the stages....I would think I am between a 3 and a 4 on any given day. I need to find a way to collaborate myself (with job-alike leaders), because that is how I will move from a 3 to a 4 in my current setting.

TRIBAL LEADERSHIP details each of the five tribal stages and helps readers identify which actions affect it and which strategies will enable the tribe to upgrade to the next level. The authors discuss how each stage has a unique set of leverage points and why it is critical to understand them—more than three quarters of the organizations they studied have tribal cultures that are adequate at best. The five stages include:

• Stage One: The stage most professionals skip, these are tribes whose members are despairingly hostile—they may create scandals, steal from the company, or even threaten violence.

• Stage Two: The dominant culture for 25 percent of workplace tribes, this stage includes members who are passively antagonistic, sarcastic, and resistant to new management initiatives.

• Stage Three: 49 percent of workplace tribes are in this stage, marked by knowledge hoarders who want to outwork and outthink their competitors on an individual basis. They are lone warriors who not only want to win, but need to be the best and brightest.

• Stage Four: The transition from "I'm great" to "we're great" comes in this stage where the tribe members are excited to work together for the benefit of the entire company.

• Stage Five: Less than 2 percent of workplace tribal culture is in this stage when members who have made substantial innovations seek to use their potential to make a global impact.

Jurgen Appelo says

Important book with many great stories, but suffers from too much hyperbole and model-building.

Jennifer (aka EM) says

Read for work. This is a low star-stage 3 (if anyone reads this, you'll find that hilarious, trust me). It was surprisingly tolerable given my intolerance for a) non-fiction; b) books written by MBAs; c)pseudo-scientific self-help manuals. It avoided for the most part a's tendency toward repetitiveness (although it was definitely filled with beating-a-dead-horse, jargony prose, and I think the copy-editor must have nodded off in the last third); b's insufferable superficiality and barely-below-the-surface best-seller goals; and c's new-age bullshittery posing as science.

For the most part.

Graham says

So, the story goes that our CEO, Jost Stollmann, asked Mike Cannon-Brookes, co-founder & co-CEO of Atlassian and one of Tyro's board members, something along the lines of…

> "If you had to recommend just one book to your leadership team, what would you choose?"

And Mike recommended: Tribal Leadership. I think I can see why.

What's the book about?

The book is about the results of ten years of research by the authors and how they found that people in organisations form tribes; that each tribe has a prevailing culture; that the cultures can be roughly grouped into five different levels; that the culture of the tribe can be an indicator of organisational success; and that the culture of individuals and of tribes can be "upgraded" through the levels using actions they describe, undertaken by tribal leaders. (Note that it's not about leaders trying to create tribes in order to succeed - the tribes are a natural phenomenon, and the benefit comes through recognising them and influencing them. It does talk about building and enhancing networks within tribes.)

The book is well-written (i.e. not boring), contains lots of case studies and interviews, has excellent summaries at the end of each chapter (no highlighting necessary!), and it doesn't just focus on what to do to become "great" - it also covers basket case cultures and how to start progressing people out of there.

What did I like about the book?

The number one thing I like about this book, as a leadership book, is that it pretty quickly gets a thoughtful reader looking not merely at their own actions and what they can do to improve, but also at how the people around them in the organisation are acting and interacting. You start to think about how to improve the company by influencing the culture, not just about how to improve your own output and your team's output by doing a few things differently.

(view spoiler)

As soon as I started reading all this, I could see how problems which I'd observed at work were caused by the behaviours detailed in the book. I also started to see problems I hadn't noticed before, or areas that were about to be problems, based simply on how people were talking to each other or about each other. I recognised in myself some things I'd been doing which were contributing to holding the culture back from where it could be.

The book has many examples of great companies to aspire to, and not just the ones you're used to reading about. Yes, there's analysis of raging startup successes like Zappos, but there's also a lot of time spent describing a hospital that focuses on creating excellent customer experiences.

The book has great advice, much of which is easy to start following, and it changed the way I behave, even as I was reading it.

Should you read it?

If you're in any kind of leadership position, in any kind of organisation, I highly recommend this book. Maybe it won't change your world, and you may not have all the influence you would need in order to affect the whole organisation. At the very least it should help you to start seeing the culture around you for what it is, and start to move it forward from the position you're in.

Chantie says

An interesting take on social interaction and relationships. While the focus was more professional related, like does tend to self-select. The premise is there are five stages that people exist within, and they are as follows:

1. Life suck (this is the person that goes postal)
2. My life sucks (this is the person that sees everyone keeping them down)
3. I'm wonderful (I'm so wonderful - the ME culture)
4. We're great (cooperative for better of group)
5. Life is great (group works for the better of the group)

After reading this, you will never look at your groups the same again. =)