Leadership From the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life

The mission of Lead With Your Life is to build Kingdom leaders who lead from the inside out. So I simply had to stop/look/listen when I encountered a book entitled Leadership From the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life. While targeting a predominantly business leader demographic, bestselling author Kevin Cashman captures the essence of his thesis when he states, “Leadership is an intimate expression of who you are; it is our whole person in action.” (I wholeheartedly agree). Well-researched, Cashman in presenting case studies and offering best practices, make a sizeable contribution to the undeniable reality that leaders ultimately lead with their lives.

Take a look at these Book Notes to catch a glimpse of the insights available to each leader who wants to take their leadership to a deeper level.

Title: **Leadership From the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life**

Author: **Kevin Cashman**

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Book Description:

Leadership from the Inside Out, Kevin Cashman’s breakthrough business bestseller that clearly connected personal growth to leadership effectiveness, is now completely revised and updated with:
-an explosion of new validating independent research
-impressive new case studies
-new tools and practices
-an even more powerful virtual coaching experience

Still framed in seven simple yet profound “mastery areas,” this book serves as an integrated coaching experience that helps leaders understand how to harness their authentic, value-creating influence and elevate their impact as individuals, in teams, and in organizations. Cashman demonstrates that his trademark “whole-person” approach—we lead by virtue of who we are—is essential to sustained success in today’s talent-starved marketplace and provides a measurable return on investment. For everyone from CEOs to emerging leaders, this long-awaited second edition advances the art and science of leadership and is even more relevant today than when it was first published.

Book Quotes:

In our consulting work, we seek to align personal leadership, team leadership, and organizational leadership to optimize purpose-driven performance. At the core of these levels of leadership is the distinction we make

between managers and leaders. Managers improve what is; managers enhance what is; managers move forward what is. Leaders go beyond what is. Indeed, if the experience of leadership is like being at the edge of an unfamiliar chasm, the act of leadership is building a bridge across that chasm. What is the bridge, then, from the known area of transactive management to the unknown area of transformative leadership? How do we build that bridge? This book will help you address these questions, as well as others, and offers the tools that will help you and your organization transcend what is and grow to the next level of personal, team, and organizational success. LOCATION: 279

Leadership is not simply something people do. It comes from a deeper reality within us. It comes from our values, traits, principles, life experiences, beliefs, motives, and essence. Leadership is an intimate expression of who we are; it is our whole person in action. LOCATION: 329

We lead by virtue of who we are. LOCATION: 333

Our training, development, and educational systems focus on learning about things. We learn what to think, not how to think. We learn what to do, not how to be. We learn what to achieve, not how to achieve. We learn about things, not the nature of things. We fill up the container of knowledge but rarely consider comprehending it, expanding it, or using it more effectively. LOCATION: 341

After reviewing thousands of leadership assessments, we challenged ourselves with the questions, "What is foundational to the most effective, results-producing leaders? What supports their various competencies or styles on the surface?" Three patterns became clear:

- Courage and Authenticity: Having the courage to authentically be our whole selves, complete with strengths, vulnerabilities, and differences; having the courage to authentically show up with openness and integrity.
- Influence: Purpose-driven communication that inspires self and others to do what is genuinely important and meaningful for the long term.
- Value Creation: Serving multiple constituencies—self, team, organization, family, community, and world—to sustain enduring performance and contribution. LOCATION: 375

Leadership is courageous, authentic influence that creates enduring value. LOCATION: 378

Leadership from the Inside Out is about our ongoing journey to discover and develop our purposeful inner capabilities to make a more positive contribution to the world around us. LOCATION: 397

Mastery of Leadership from the Inside Out is not merely a function of achieving things. It is principally about achieving one thing—consciously and courageously making a bigger difference by fully applying our potential. LOCATION: 400

As the person grows, the leader grows. The missing element in most leadership development programs is actually the "Master Competency" of growing the whole person to grow the whole leader. LOCATION: 414

Leaders who courageously work on authenticity—alignment of their real values and their actions—are more energetic, trust-inspiring, resilient, influential, and interpersonally connected. LOCATION: 422

Helping leaders move from transactive management focused on speed, accuracy, and performance to transformative leadership, which fosters significance, authenticity, and purpose, greatly accelerates the agile leadership needed today. LOCATION: 425

Leadership from the Inside Out involves clarifying our inner identity, purpose, and vision so that our lives thereafter are dedicated to a more conscious, intentional manner of living and leading. LOCATION: 430

I once heard a poignant story about a priest, who was confronted by a soldier while he was walking down a road in pre-revolutionary Russia. The soldier, using his rifle to block the path of the priest, commanded, “Who are you? Where are you going? Why are you going there?” Unfazed, the priest calmly replied, “How much do they pay you?” Somewhat surprised, the soldier responded, “Twenty-five kopecks a month.” The priest paused and, in a deeply thoughtful manner, said, “I have a proposal for you. I’ll pay you fifty kopecks each month if you stop me here every day and challenge me to respond to those same three questions.” LOCATION: 519

Self-aware leaders have the strong, authentic foundation on which to build sustainable performance. LOCATION: 571

Of all the principles supporting sustainable leadership, authenticity is one of the most important. It also can be one of the most challenging. LOCATION: 573

We all behave in perfect alignment with our current level of emotional, psychological, and spiritual evolution. All our actions and relationships, as well as the quality and power of our leadership, accurately express the person we have become. Therefore, we conclude that we are “authentic,” because we are doing the best we can with the information, experience, competencies, and traits that we have at this time. LOCATION: 577

There is a big catch, however. While we are authentic to our current state of development, we are inauthentic to our potential state of development. LOCATION: 580

To deepen authenticity—to nourish leadership from the inside out—takes time, attention, and courage. In today’s world, the amount of distraction and busyness we all experience keeps us from undertaking the inward journey and engaging in the quiet reflection required to become more authentic human beings. LOCATION: 583

Another prominent feature of highly authentic individuals is openness. Whether they come to authenticity naturally or work hard to attain it, the most real, genuine, sincere leaders tend to have the courage to be open about both their capabilities and their vulnerabilities. LOCATION: 603

Level 5 leaders—authentic leaders—see their purpose beyond their limited selves as passionate instruments of service and contribution. LOCATION: 618

Transactive managers do things right; transformative leaders do the right thing. LOCATION: 650

Beliefs literally create our reality; they are the lenses or filters through which we interpret the world. Some of these “lenses” focus and open up new horizons; others dim our view and limit possibilities. Beliefs are transformational. Every belief we have transforms our life in either a life-enriching or life-limiting way. As Bruce Lipton wrote in The Biology of Belief, “Our beliefs control our bodies, our minds, and our lives.” In a sense, beliefs are the “software of leadership,” our deeply personal operating system that runs the show on the surface. LOCATION: 653

What we believe, we become. LOCATION: 666

Transforming Shadow Beliefs to Conscious Beliefs is crucial to Personal Mastery. This is not to say we don’t struggle continually with them. We do. The difference is that we consciously and courageously engage them rather than unconsciously being driven by them. What happens to us if we don’t deal with Shadow Beliefs? We pay a high price. Addictive behaviors, difficulty in relationships, achievement overdrive, a domineering or weak

leadership voice, imbalanced lifestyles, and health problems can be some of the costs. Shadow Beliefs are not scary; not dealing with them is. LOCATION: 704

Leaders either shed light or cast a shadow on everything they do. The more conscious their self-awareness, the more light leaders bring. The more limited their self-understanding, the bigger the shadow a leader casts. LOCATION: 736

What happens when we are around highly competent people who have the courage to be real and open about themselves and the situations they face? We trust them. Their authenticity, vulnerability, and Personal Mastery have made them trustworthy, and we rush to their side. LOCATION: 764

When people know you will deeply and authentically listen to them, people will be authentic and honest with you. LOCATION: 778

Authenticity requires a lifelong courageous commitment to self-discovery, self-observation, and self-authorship. Because the word authenticity comes from the same Greek root as the word author, I'm sure no one would be surprised that authoring your own life is a continuous journey. LOCATION: 800

We need to constantly consider the origin of our leadership in various circumstances. Is our leadership serving only ourselves—our career and success—or is it also focused on our team and organization? Is our leadership arising from our Character, which is driven to serve others? Or is it derived from a pattern of Coping, where we tend to react to circumstances to elicit a more immediate or self-serving result? LOCATION: 805

Interestingly, courage is one of those rare leadership characteristics, like trust, that is both a competency and a character trait. Courage and trust are foundational to progressive and sustained leadership performance; courage gives us the strength to create the future, and trust keeps us together as we venture into the unknown. Therefore, courage and character are not merely desirable, more ethical ways to lead; they are fundamental to leading versus managing. Transformative leaders create the future with courage and character; transactive managers ensure present performance with control. LOCATION: 822

When we care a bit too much how we look to others and focus on getting their approval, adulation, or acceptance, our leadership may be guided by an Image Coping pattern. We are in this image persona when we try too hard to "look great"; when we present ourselves as more than we are; when our brand is more important than our substance; and when we misrepresent values, beliefs, or other information to win acceptance. LOCATION: 856

If our actions are principally guided by safety, security, and comfort, we are in a Coping pattern. This is a big one for most of us. It is also subtle. We are usually unaware of how staying safe is actually limiting new experiences and possibilities. How often have most of us thought, "When I build up enough assets, then I'll go do what I really want to do"? This is the voice of Coping. LOCATION: 870

If our energies are absorbed in having the world conform to our will, with a desire to avoid nearly all surprise, then we are likely leading from a place of Coping. This is particularly challenging if we are moving from managerial to leadership roles in an organization. Managers control by virtue of their heroic doing; leaders collaborate by virtue of their generous being. When we are rapidly alternating between management and leadership, as is often the case, the relationship between control and openness is a constant dynamic. LOCATION: 885

While spreadsheets are the language of management information, stories are the language of leadership inspiration. Stories can activate our deepest, best selves; they are certainly one of the most transformative of all leadership tools. Powerful narratives can bridge the authentic, essential depth of a leader to the complex

breadth of strategy, culture, values, and purpose. LOCATION: 1108

Anthony de Mello, the spiritual teacher and writer, put it beautifully when he wrote, “The shortest distance between a human being and the truth is a story.” Likewise, the shortest distance between a leader and collective inspiration is a heartfelt story. LOCATION: 1123

Like all aspects of leadership growth, Story Mastery is a combination of art and science that can be learned, developed, and practiced. It begins from the inside out with finding our own stories. This begins the transformative experience, but its real potential for transformative impact is in connecting people and ideas to something much larger, more important, and more purposeful. This energizes the feedback loop from both the inside out and the outside in. LOCATION: 1214

Story Mastery requires a continual process of acquiring, collecting, refining, and expressing narratives that move you and others to greater aspiration. LOCATION: 1428

Stories elevate souls by shaking off the dust of daily living and revealing the interwoven fabric of traumas, values, privileges, losses, and learnings. Like an archaeologist exploring our personal and professional pasts, we need to excavate and discover our most formative, impactful, value-creating stories. LOCATION: 1431

As a leader, if you say something is important or valued, then what are your stories that illustrate, demonstrate, and inspire people in that direction? An important leadership development practice is to begin to archive your stories that correlate with your most deeply held beliefs, values, and leadership principles. Having a large collection of stories will allow you to easily access the most relevant in a given situation. Become the curator of your ever-expanding story collection. LOCATION: 1437

Stories are about aligning and experiencing important, compelling topics together. They are not about you and your performance. Stories are the language of leadership: authentic and courageous influence that creates enduring value. LOCATION: 1452

We have all experienced a story whose intention is to make the teller look good in the eyes of others. This person wants to be seen as the hero at the center of the story. This narcissistic use of stories may benefit the image of the leader in the short run, but more often it diminishes credibility and followership for both the short term and the long term. Stories designed to impress are typically not very impressive. LOCATION: 1480

Stories are the single most important tool in a leader’s toolkit. —Howard Gardner LOCATION: 1509

Story Mastery includes a five-step process for developing this skill.

- Step One: Know Your Story. The journey to self-awareness and greater leadership impact begins here. Without this first reflective step, there is no point in going further.
- Step Two: Reframe Your Story by examining whether your interpretation or internalization of the story still serves you and others. Ask yourself if this narrative and belief system, which was appropriate in the past, is still relevant today.
- Step Three: Be Your Story. This is the journey to authenticity. Knowing your story is great, but if you do not embody the story, or at least attempt to be it, your voice will be superficial.
- Step Four: Express Your Story. This is the journey to inspiration, when you work on powerful, relevant ways to share your stories.
- Step Five: Discover the Plot. This is the journey to purpose, in which we surface the

meaningful themes that have been running through our life. LOCATION: 1510 – 1520

Purpose powers performance. It elevates leaders and teams to move from short-term success to long-term significance. LOCATION: 1571

As leaders we have a responsibility to address this significant question: “Why is it so important that we exist?” With this question, we courageously face who we are and how we are in the world. LOCATION: 1575

There are three big realities that we, as leaders, have to clarify and place in meaningful relationship for our organizations to thrive:

- The Big What Question (Vision): What is possible for us to become?
- The Big How Question (Strategy): How will we get there?
- The Big Why Question (Purpose): Why is it so important that we exist in the world? LOCATION: 1641

By focusing on purpose—an aspiration that lifts us and infuses significant meaning in our day-to-day work—and putting it first, we catalyze our courage and authentic influence to create enduring value. LOCATION: 1648

Our commitment to purpose compels us to ask additional, profound, Big What questions: What will we become in five to ten years if we live our purpose? What larger difference will we serve through our efforts and the enterprise? What is possible through purpose? Purpose brings energy and motivation to fuel the vision and the strategy. Managers tend to focus on the What and How, wondering Why anything else is important; leaders awaken the wonder of Why to envision a more expanded, compelling What and How. LOCATION: 1649

The high-performance nucleus of purpose-driven leadership is where our Core Talents are in service to our Core Values. This is the value-creating state of authentic leadership, where the whole person is present and making a tangible difference. Clarifying this dynamic intersection, where our talents and values meet, is the important goal of Purpose Mastery: optimizing our gifts in service to the greater difference we aspire to make with others. LOCATION: 1705

Turning our work-life into our “life’s work” may be one of the most critical growth areas for moving from management transaction to leadership transformation. In the end, the true measure of our lives will likely be less about our accomplishments and more about how our gifts have made an enduring, purpose-driven difference in the lives of people. LOCATION: 1719

This focusing process is expedited by engaging in a journey to answer two critical questions: • What is so important to me that I am endlessly fascinated by it? • When I am at my best and creating value for others, what am I bringing to make this happen? LOCATION: 1900

Purpose Mastery frames all our life and career experiences as part of a meaningful whole. When we understand purpose, all the challenging experiences of our lives serve to forge identity, character, and meaning. Although life may be challenging, every experience becomes our teacher, every challenge an opportunity through which we learn and live more purposefully. When we lack purpose, immediate circumstances dominate our awareness and overshadow our reason for being; life tends to lose connection with its true nature. Teilhard de Chardin wrote, “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” Purpose is spirit seeking expression; awareness of it allows us to see our lives more clearly from the inside out. LOCATION: 1938

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.