

Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul

Early in its pages, author and pastor Lance Witt in his book *Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul*, makes an all-important declaration: *Godly leadership is always inside out. God always has and always will choose to smile on men and women who are healthy, holy, and humble.* From there, he warns leaders that without prioritizing their interior lives, they run the risk of doing harm—often significant harm—to those they lead, serve and love. I could not agree more.

This book needs to be required reading for anyone who serves as a spiritual leader—in the home, in the workplace, in the church, and in the community. Check out these **Book Notes** to both inspire you and guide you in leading from the inside out.

Chuck Olson
Founder | Lead With Your Life

Title: *Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul*

Author: Lance Witt

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Book Description:

Every leader functions on two stages—the front stage or public world, and the back stage or private world. One cannot lead successfully front stage when one is completely depleted back stage. In a time when pastors are leaving the ministry in record numbers due to cynicism, disillusionment, weariness, and personal scandals, there is an urgent need for soul care in the private lives of leaders.

Replenish helps leaders focus on the back stage, the interior life, in order to remain spiritually healthy

Book Quotes:

We will never grow healthy churches with unhealthy leaders. LOCATION: 168

This book is all about the leader. It's not about your organizational structure, your missional strategies, or your ministry goals. It's about you. LOCATION: 168

Getting healthy will require us to pull back the veneer. It won't happen until we're serious enough to get honest, own our stuff, and take responsibility for our soul care. We'll need to go to some of the most private corners of our soul . . . dark places where personal ambition, insecurity, fear, and brokenness reside. LOCATION: 176

Leadership is wonderful . . . until it morphs into an idol. LOCATION: 205

Today's troubling statistics on pastors paint a bleak picture. 1,500 pastors leave the ministry permanently each month in America. 80% of pastors and 85% of their spouses feel discouraged in their roles. LOCATION: 214

70% of pastors do not have a close friend, confidant, or mentor. Over 50% of pastors are so discouraged they would leave the ministry if they could but have no other way of making a living. Over 50% of pastors' wives feel that their husband entering ministry was the most destructive thing to ever happen to their families. 30% of pastors said they had either been in an ongoing affair or had a one-time sexual encounter with a parishioner. 71% of pastors stated they were burned out, and they battle depression beyond fatigue on a weekly and even a daily basis. One out of every ten ministers will actually retire as a minister. LOCATION: 216

We have neglected the fact that a pastor's greatest leadership tool is a healthy soul. Our concentration on skill and technique and strategy has resulted in deemphasizing the interior life. The outcome is an increasing number of men and women leading our churches who are emotionally empty and spiritually dry. LOCATION: 223

We've all witnessed the carnage of leaders who've had to leave ministry (at least for now) because of moral failure. The headlines are always about the scandalous and shocking behavior, but rarely mentioned is the back-story. LOCATION: 226

It is the story of a neglected soul and mismanaged character. Of a slow drift into relational isolation. Of being seduced by ambition. These leaders didn't intend for it to happen, but somewhere along the journey they stopped paying attention to what was going on inside of them. The shift was incremental and at times imperceptible. LOCATION: 228

When leaders neglect their interior life, they run the risk of prostituting the sacred gift of leadership. And they run the risk of being destructive instead of productive. LOCATION: 234

Godly leadership is always inside out. God always has and always will choose to smile on men and women who are healthy, holy, and humble. LOCATION: 248

True spiritual dignity comes from a healthy soul and a life marked by spiritual power and the presence of Christ. LOCATION: 259

We all have a front-stage life and a back-stage life. Front stage is the public world of ministry. It's where we're noticed, where the spotlight is on us, where people applaud and affirm us. On the front stage everything is orderly and neatly in its place. It's where we cast vision, inspire others, and lead with skill. Front stage is all about doing. But we also have a back-stage life, and the two are connected. If we neglect the back stage, eventually the front stage will fall apart. While the front stage is the public world of leadership, the back stage is the private world of the leader. The back stage is private, always dark, and usually messy. The audience isn't allowed there. Back stage has no spotlight and no glory. What happens back stage facilitates and empowers what takes place on the front stage. Back stage is all about "being." LOCATION: 284

This is exactly what Jesus taught—that the Christian life is inside out, that the private informs the public. He taught that out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. He taught that the root (back stage) determines the fruit (front stage). LOCATION: 296

Our soul is far and away the most valuable possession we have. Just as you need to tend to your body to be physically healthy, you must tend to your soul if you want to be spiritually healthy. LOCATION: 327

I would like to suggest a three-part strategy this book will guide you through.

- Realize. This is about taking the time to reflect and be honest about the issues that are a threat to your soul. Part of the process will be to discover, identify, and name the things putting holes in your bucket.
- Repair. Once you've identified the holes, you can start to take steps to repair them. The section of this book

called “Start Here . . . Start Now” is intended to help you start taking some steps toward a healthier soul.

- Refill. Once you’ve been forthright about what’s threatening your soul and have begun to patch the holes, you can begin to focus on refilling your bucket. This is about learning to fill your soul and lead from a healthy place. You’ll discover some habits that can sustain a lifetime of spiritual health. By the way, this has everything to do with your ministry effectiveness. LOCATION: 333

Never lose sight of the fact that the box (your ministry) is not as valuable as the gift (Jesus). And the only reason the box exists is to deliver the gift. You have dedicated your life to the gift, not to the box. LOCATION: 409

Image management is what we begin to do when our inner world becomes separated from our outer world. LOCATION: 419

According to Jesus, the Pharisees seemed clean, righteous, and pure, but inwardly they were filthy, impure, and self-indulgent. Paying attention to your outer life while your inner life languishes is like getting a facelift when you have a malignant tumor. LOCATION: 429

What makes selfish ambition so insidious is we can see it in others but not in ourselves. Either because of denial or self-deception, we are usually the last person to see the unhealthy ambition that has taken root in our soul. Long before it becomes apparent to us, it is seen clearly by others. LOCATION: 537

This is one reason it’s so important to build solitude into your life. At least for me, during times of listening and quiet God turns the spotlight of the Holy Spirit onto my ambition. But if I’m moving at an insane pace and there is no room in my life for quiet, I will miss God’s voice. And I will continue on a path of self-deception. LOCATION: 543

There was a time when the fires in Southern California came dangerously close to our house. As they rapidly advanced over the hilltops, the community made every effort to create a fire break. Crews removed every piece of dry brush from yards that backed up to the wilderness area. Helicopters were in the air around the clock dumping huge buckets of water around the perimeter. Our neighborhood was spared. The local news referred to our plight as the “perfect storm of fires.” These conditions created the environment for hundreds of explosive fires. Three dangerous conditions converged: extended drought, excessive heat, and strong Santa Ana winds. In ministry, the perfect storm for a personal disaster is also the convergence of three elements: ambition, isolation, and self-deception. LOCATION: 559

The starting place is to have an accurate understanding of humility. Humility is not being down on yourself. It is not self-ridicule. I like Andrew Murray’s definition. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing. LOCATION: 569

It has been said that for those of us in ministry, compliments are written in sand, but criticism is written in wet cement. That has certainly been true for me. I have carried disapproval deeply, and it takes a long time to wear off. As a result, you can end up working hard at being a diplomat and constantly sharpening your people skills to minimize criticism. LOCATION: 618

Ministry is a character profession. I can’t separate my private life from my public leadership. According to Jesus, it is the holiness of my private life that gives spiritual power and validation to my public ministry. LOCATION: 654

It’s a recipe for dysfunction and disaster when a leader is organizationally and relationally isolated. My observation is that a leader who is isolated organizationally is twice as isolated relationally. LOCATION: 671

Hurry is more about what's going on inside you than what is going on around you. As I heard John Ortberg say once, "Hurry is not about a disordered schedule, it is about a disordered heart." LOCATION: 721

Your ministry will take all you give it. Your church will take all you are willing to give it. Ministry demands will always exceed your capacity. LOCATION: 804

If I've learned anything about the health of churches in the last several years it's this: The weekend experience is a poor indicator of the health of a church. In fact, attendance alone is not a good gauge of effectiveness for any ministry event. LOCATION: 832

Yesterday I was on a flight with a quite elderly lady. When she got out into baggage claim, her husband was sitting on a bench waiting for her. When he saw her, he lit up like a Christmas tree. With cane in hand he moved toward her and kissed her like a newlywed. It was awesome. I don't know what kind of life this couple has shared. They might have had a successful business. They could have made a lot of money. They might have been famous for all I know. But now they're in their twilight years. Their looks have faded. Their physical strength is diminished. There was no fanfare upon her return. No limo, no media, no spotlight. There was just one person to greet her, but it was the one person with whom she'd shared her life. They have each other, and that's enough. Obscurity didn't matter. The relationship did...Someday the trappings of ministry will fade away. We'll move out of the office. We won't have a business card or a title. The spotlight will turn to someone else. But if we've been sharing our life with Jesus, obscurity won't matter. The relationship will. LOCATION: 1122

So, how do you do this, practically? You get crystal clear about your values and priorities. Mindy Caliguire writes, "Simplicity means taking action to align one's exterior world with one's interior values and commitment to God." When my values get clear, decisions get simple. Not easy, but simple. Simplicity is not necessarily about doing less. It's about using your priorities to filter opportunities and options. LOCATION: 1161

I've devised a formula that helps me in my pursuit of simplicity: Clarity + Courage + Calendar = Simplicity. LOCATION: 1179

The truth is those of us in ministry often don't do the friendship thing very well. One survey among pastors found that 70 percent do not have a close friend, confidant, or mentor. Henri Nouwen wrote, "Most Christian leadership is exercised by people who do not know how to develop healthy, intimate relationships." What an indictment. LOCATION: 1314

Courage is not an issue of wiring, but of willingness. It's not an issue of DNA, but of heart. I have always found comfort and hope in Ambrose Redmoon's definition: Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear. LOCATION: 1491

If I'm going to be spiritually healthy, I must find ways to cancel the noise around me and experience times of solitude. Solitude. The word itself sounds serene and peaceful. Most everyone I know longs for more solitude. LOCATION: 1685

Solitude is not so much about a place as it is about space—space to reflect, pray, think, listen, and be. LOCATION: 1724

Henri Nouwen eloquently articulated the freedom that solitude can bring: [Solitude] is the place where Christ remodels us in his own image and frees us from the victimizing compulsions of the world . . . In solitude we become aware that our worth is not the same as our usefulness. LOCATION: 1735

Maturing as a leader comes with some hard but rich lessons. One of those is to learn that real joy comes not in promoting self but dying to self. And, that real satisfaction comes in being nothing so that Jesus might be

everything. LOCATION: 1828

I really believe part of what it means to be spiritually healthy is to avoid losing touch with one's own depravity. I must hold in balance my blessedness and brokenness. Yes, I am more blessed than I can even fathom, but I am also more broken than I can grasp. Even though I've been redeemed and the "old man" has been crucified, I still live in a fallen world and the seduction of the flesh is still an everyday battle. LOCATION: 1880

There's an interesting pattern that develops in Deuteronomy when God is speaking to the Israelites. Five different times he calls on them to remember they'd been slaves in Egypt and he had rescued them. Then, each time he gives them a command to follow. But the starting place was for them to recall what they had been. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt . . . now, observe the Sabbath. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt . . . now, when you release a slave, supply him liberally. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt . . . now, give a freewill offering. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt . . . now, treat foreigners, orphans, and widows fairly. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt . . . now, when you harvest, leave some behind for the foreigner, orphan, and widow...Then, the Lord says, Remember this and never forget how you provoked the Lord your God to anger in the desert. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the Lord. I'm struck by the phrase "Remember this and never forget." Never forget what you're capable of. Never forget how easily you can rebel. Never forget your potential for evil. LOCATION: 1903

Another benefit of staying in touch with my depravity is that it helps me be less critical and more loving toward people. At least for me, the more I have pondered my brokenness and the wonder of God's grace toward me, the more I tend to see people differently and treat them a little more graciously. When I know what's inside me, who am I to be condescending or stand in harsh judgment over anyone? LOCATION: 1926

Attention is one of the most powerful forces in the world. Paying attention is a sign of spiritual health. When you give someone your attention, you are saying, "You matter," "I am interested in you," and "I've got time for you." LOCATION: 2062

Another appropriate translation for "gentleness" would be graciousness. I believe this is one of the most endearing qualities a leader can possess. A healthy leader is gracious. A godly leader is gracious. I've learned that a person's ability to communicate on the platform doesn't tell me much about their godliness, but a person's graciousness off the platform tells me a great deal about their humility and Christlikeness. LOCATION: 2142

The people on my team have to know I care about them personally, not just professionally. I must value them for who they are, not just what they can do. LOCATION: 2301

I'm talking about the kind of care that regularly conveys, "What matters most is not what we want from you, but what we want for you. We care about your marriage. We care about your kids. We care about your health. We care about your walk with God." LOCATION: 2307

A few questions that will help prime the pump as people prepare to share their story: What have been some turning points/defining moments in your life? What experiences (good and bad) have shaped you? LOCATION: 2335

Who had the most significant influence on your life? How did they influence you? When have you felt successful? When have you felt God's pleasure? What was life like growing up? Describe your home life. Describe the most difficult season of your spiritual journey. What has been the biggest transition in your life? What has been your greatest disappointment? What was your view of God growing up? In recent years, how has your relationship with God grown and changed? How would you want to be remembered? LOCATION: 2343

That's why leaders must take responsibility to bring clarity to the team culture. Marcus Buckingham, who writes about maximizing strengths, says, "Clarity is the preoccupation of the effective leader. If you do nothing else as a leader, be clear." LOCATION: 2442

What is true of the body is also true of churches and ministries. Making your ministry function are basic systems like communication, lines of authority, budget, calendaring, programming, hiring, and decision making. The long-term health of your church/ministry is absolutely driven by and dependent on the health of these systems. LOCATION: 2535

You can have a great platform ministry with a great communicator and great worship music, but if the systems underneath are diseased and broken, the health of the ministry will eventually deteriorate. LOCATION: 2537

As Andy Stanley says, "The system down the hall trumps the mission on the wall." It takes intentional systems that foster health. LOCATION: 2541

Systems modify behavior, which in turn creates healthy habits that result in positive change. LOCATION: 2543

Attunement has to do with aligning hearts. It's about relationship and bringing people along. It's about creating a sense of ownership and buy-in. I can force alignment organizationally and lead from my positional role, but attunement comes only from relationship, when those who follow us trust us and know we care about them. LOCATION: 2615

I have developed "Ten Commandments of Technology and Team" that I believe, if followed, would create a healthier team environment.

1. Thou shalt not use e-mail to deliver bad news.
2. Thou shalt not put anything in e-mail that you would mind having forwarded . . . because it probably will be.
3. Thou shalt not e-mail (or chat online) during meetings.
4. Thou shalt not use "bcc."
5. Thou shalt be more personal than professional.
6. Thou shalt keep e-mails short and to the point.
7. Thou shalt not text or take calls while in conversation or in a meeting.
8. Thou shalt not call or e-mail people on their day off.
9. Thou shalt use e-mail for prayer and encouragement.
10. Thou shalt give phone/e-mail/Facebook/Twitter (etc.) a Sabbath. LOCATION: 2686-2725

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