The Catalyst Leader: 8 Essentials for Becoming a Change Maker

Over the past 12 years, Brad Lomenick has been running point in convening, equipping, and inspiring a movement of young leaders called Catalyst. From this rich backdrop, he plays the part of curator in providing a written collection of leadership principles and insights. In his book, The Catalyst Leader: 8 Essentials for Becoming a Change Maker, Lomenick offers a very readable, challenging, and uplifting book.

Title: ***The Catalyst Leader: 8 Essentials for Becoming a Change Maker***

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Book Description:

We need great leaders. More than ever we need authentic, collaborative, inspiring men and women of integrity at the helm of society—and too often our leaders fall short. Some focus on personal success, alienating those they lead. Others shift their principles when it is convenient.

There is a better way. You can energize and inspire the people around you. You can equip a team of principled collaborators to answer God's calling. You can be a catalyst leader.

In The Catalyst Leader, Brad Lomenick describes the skills and principles that define a true change maker. This book offers eight key essentials by which a leader can influence others and make a difference, laying out the path to the keys for becoming an effective leader.

Lomenick shares wisdom, practical knowledge, and stories of success and failure from his own journey of running Catalyst, one of America's most influential leadership movements. And the lives of dozens of leaders around the world—from the creators of famous reality show to pastors, from ranch workers to a Silicon Valley designer. These men and women are living proof that good leadership inspires and innovates, while poor leadership leaves us with hopelessness and regret.

Leading can be a difficult road, and many choose to follow. But you can take a better path. Begin your journey to becoming a catalyst leader.

Book Quotes:

I've written The Catalyst Leader to empower you to lead better and longer. I'm hopeful that you can be great; but greatness takes work. You've been handed a set of keys, but you must learn how to drive responsibly. To avoid road hazards and take the correct streets. To learn when to press ahead and when to pull over. So I've attempted to give you a trustworthy road map—sketched with insider stories from my experience of leading Catalyst, one of America's largest networks and gatherers of young leaders—and to offer practical advice you can incorporate into your life and work.

LOCATION: 251

This is possible by developing the eight essentials for becoming a change maker that I'll share with you. Keep in mind that you cannot pick and choose from this list. An individual who develops only five or six of these characteristics is not a catalyst leader. That's why they are called essentials, not strengths. You must commit to them all.
LOCATION: 271

Ambition must be grounded in wisdom. Inspiration must be pursued with integrity. Dreams must be built with boundaries. And passions need the steady hand of principles to guide them.
LOCATION: 390

Every Christian has two callings in life: a spiritual one to salvation and also a vocational calling. Life is too short to miss either one. Your two callings are separate but inseparable. The first informs the way you'll live out your second calling. The realization of what Christ has done for us produces a compulsion to live for Him. When we talk about one's "calling," we're speaking about the vocational kind that answers this question: "I've decided to follow God, but how does He want me to use my gifts and passions?"
LOCATION: 479

As I have surveyed some of today's rising Christian leaders, I've discovered a profound thing they share in common: leaders who make the biggest impact also have the strongest sense of calling. They seem to know the direction God has marked out for them, and they're chasing after it.
LOCATION: 502

Calling is not necessarily about a title, position, or even a certain career, but more about a vision and purpose for your life that spans all the seasons of your vocation.
LOCATION: 596

For five years, I was part of the team that produced Life@Work magazine, a publication committed to wrestling through issues of faith and vocation. We had a definition of calling that formed the foundation of our work, and I still believe it to be better than most: "God's personal invitation for me to work on His agenda, using the talents I've been given in ways that are eternally significant." For some of us, the invitation just appears in our mailbox one day with our name on it. But for most of us, it takes time and prayer and a period of discerning.
LOCATION: 667

Asking questions like these is key to finding the right answers. Here are several others I think are helpful for deciphering God's invitation to you:

1. What are your passions and gifts? At the intersection of these two elements, you'll find your purpose in life.
2. What would you work on or want to do for free? That is usually a good sign of what God has designed you to do.
3. What energized you when you were a child? Does it still animate you? Knowing your calling is often directly connected to childhood passions and gifts.
4. If you could do anything and take a pay cut, what would that be? You may have to blow up your financial goals in order to pursue your true calling.
5. What barriers are preventing you from pursuing your true calling? Can you begin removing those?

6. If you aren't engaging your gifts and talents where you find yourself now, could you make changes in your current role to better engage those? Don't rule out the possibility that where you are is where you need to be. LOCATION: 676

If we don't learn to be content with who God has made us and called us to be, then we will never reach our potential as influencers.
LOCATION: 789

As unhealthy as modern media trends are, they have a positive side too. Authentic leaders rise to the top in a world of knockoffs, imitations, and counterfeits. Our society has created an appetite for authenticity. Consumers crave magazine covers without unrealistic, Photoshopped veneers. Documentaries center on raw backstage interviews and honest encounters. People demand musical artists who avoid lip-synching at concerts and award shows, as Ashley Simpson can attest. Today, authenticity is not just expected; it's required. Forty percent of respondents in our research said authenticity is one of the most important leadership traits of the next decade, and 47 percent said they first look for authenticity in a potential boss.
LOCATION: 813

Today's leaders must develop the art of self-awareness. We must grow comfortable with who we are before we can share that person with others. Recognizing one's true self is a prerequisite for releasing one's true self. No one wants to work for someone who seems unaware of his or her faults, failures, and weaknesses.
LOCATION: 834

Here are some best practices I've found helpful to cultivate the essential leadership trait of authenticity:

- Practice self-awareness.
- Question yourself.
- Move from self-promotion to storytelling.
- Resist the urge to create a digital alter ego.
- Learn to laugh at yourself.
- Build a support network.
- Be interested over interesting.

LOCATION: 927

Constantly turn over the rocks in your life and leadership. Uncover areas that need to be made clean. Big things are at stake. It's exhausting to keep up a fake persona. Learn to be honest. It's easier to impress people from a distance, so many leaders keep others at arm's length. For example, we often prefer digital interaction to life-on-life exchanges. This insulates us and prevents others from uncovering our weaknesses and flaws. But it also reduces our ability to influence others.
LOCATION: 928

Being a change maker means realizing that commitment to God and passion for following Jesus cannot be compartmentalized. It cannot be restricted to Sundays and sacred spaces. For the catalyst leader, Mondays through Fridays are holy days. Boardrooms are sacred spaces, and so are Hollywood studio lots, high-rise offices, and neighborhood coffee shops. Accounting can be a spiritual act; practicing medicine can be a spiritual act; working on an assembly line can be a spiritual act; teaching can be a spiritual act.
LOCATION: 1025

Those who desire to influence and impact others will never reach their full potential unless they develop a

contagious love for the One who has called them.
LOCATION: 1148

Sustained leadership requires practicing the discipline of replenishment. Pastor Bill Hybels says you need a strategy to accomplish this in your life daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. Leaders often get depleted by their work, and we need to recharge and regroup in intentional ways. Nothing will sap your passion for God like burnout.
LOCATION: 1172

I've noticed that as leaders' margins decrease, so does their spiritual vitality. But margins in business create profits; margins in family create memories; margins in personal finances create opportunities; and in all of life, margins create options to pursue dreams, pray, plan, and reflect. So create moments each week to practice the Sabbath. Building in times of rest will pay dividends.
LOCATION: 1179

Without courage, your calling is crippled. Even if you have a crystal-clear vision from God about the path you should pursue—and most of us don't—it will not alter your direction one whit until you have enough courage to act on it. Courage moves us from ideals to action, from potential to actuality.
LOCATION: 1589

Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the commitment to overcome it. Courage doesn't mean you're not afraid; it means you battle against your fear and confront it. Courage pushes you to resist the impulse to shy away from the things that stir up your innermost anxieties. Courage is required and must be a constant. It's tiny pieces of fear all glued together.
LOCATION: 1597

I love Jesus' words in John 16:33: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (NIV). The Christian life is one that holds in tension both realism and idealism. It accepts life's uncertainties and inevitabilities but recognizes that hope remains. Following Jesus does not mean we will not falter or fail or fear, but rather that in the midst of those realities we are able to "take heart."
LOCATION: 1635

Seven Signs You're "Too Big for Your Britches"

1. You feel like you need an entourage everywhere you go.
2. You're unreachable, using systems and handlers to shield you from others.
3. The only people you make time for are those who can do something for you.
4. You speak and offer advice far more than you ask questions and take notes.
5. You quit laughing, especially at yourself.
6. You feel certain jobs are beneath you and would be offended if someone asked you to perform those tasks.
7. You feel no one's work ever meets your approval—except your own.

LOCATION: 1952

Nurture a spirit of humility as you seek to lead and you'll get results you previously thought impossible.
LOCATION: 2003

Discipline is the second essential element of a principled life. When I consider young leaders who are truly making a difference—the ones whose organizations and projects are innovative and effective—the one characteristic they all share is a commitment to hard work.
LOCATION: 2034

Being a steadfast leader means doing what you say you are going to do. Your “yes” is yes, and your “no” is no. Credibility is achieved through discipline and capability. People want to follow leaders who are credible—who do what they say they will do. Your team wants to believe that your word can be trusted, that you are passionate about the work you are doing, that you know where you are headed, and that you have the necessary knowledge, perseverance, and skill to lead.
LOCATION: 2099

Once you identify your own land mines, you must set up systems of accountability. I’ve witnessed many leaders over the last decade who simply became disconnected. In order to lead well, you must avoid insulating and isolating. Stay connected with people whom you can trust and be honest with. People to whom you give permission to peer below the surface and who are not impressed by you. Integrity is essential; therefore, accountability is one of the great engines of leadership longevity. Who speaks truth into your life? Who can honestly tell you when you are wrong and keep you in touch with reality?
LOCATION: 2199

Remember, character is built over time and in the small moments. The seemingly insignificant decisions you make when you think no one is watching or paying attention will carve your character. So don’t overlook everyday opportunities to build up your integrity. These incremental tests compose one’s greater character.
LOCATION: 2216

The depth of your character determines the reach of your influence.
LOCATION: 2245

Leaders are dealers of hope, and we must give it away constantly and without bias. If a leader wants to make a mark on this world, he or she must have a compelling vision for his or her work. It must be hopeful and inspiring. Just as every leader should have a personal calling statement, he or she also needs a personal legacy statement. John Maxwell says people will describe your life in one sentence—so what is the sentence you want people to use to describe you when you leave this world? If you are young, make sure to sketch it with a pencil that has a fresh eraser, because you will refine this numerous times over your life.
LOCATION: 2366

Managers work on things that are right in front of them. They manage the e-mail inbox, respond to staff crises, sign checks, pay bills, and then drive home to relax at night before they have to do it all over again. Manage, rinse, repeat. But leaders are fixated on the next day, the next goal, the next project. While managers are tending the grass, leaders are peering over the hill. Sure, they respond to what is in front of them in the here and now, but they are also brainstorming about tomorrow. They exert energy to invent the future. Unlike a manager, a leader lives in the tension of the now and the next.
LOCATION: 2397

Every strong leader I’ve met shares at least one desire: to grow. Leaders want to improve and expand their reach and influence. I’ve never met an effective leader of an organization who says, “I think we’re about as successful as we need to be. I’ve decided we should just coast from now on.” But progress has a price tag. When your organization achieves a certain size or level of success, you’ll begin to experience a whole slate of problems you’ve never encountered before.
LOCATION: 2590

The first question explored what Christians believe to be the most important traits that leaders need to possess given all the changes taking place in the world. Respondents were given ten different options, including short descriptions, to choose from:

1. Courage—being willing to take risks
2. Vision—knowing where you are going
3. Competence—being good at what you do
4. Humility—giving credit to others
5. Collaboration—working well with others
6. Passion for God—loving God more than anything else
7. Integrity—doing the right thing
8. Authenticity—being truthful and reliable
9. Purpose—being made for or “called” to the job 10.
10. Discipline—the ability to stay focused and get things done

LOCATION: 3012