Trust and Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others

In his thought-provoking book: *Trust & Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others*, author and speaker Stephen M.R. Covey, contrasts two very different leadership styles: Trust & Inspire and Command & Control. In making his case, here are some of his opening words: *Trust & Inspire is the new way to lead. Its goal is to unleash people's talent and potential—to truly empower and inspire them—rather than try to contain and control them. It's about trusting people to do the right thing and inspiring them to make meaningful contributions.*

I found the book filled with convincing reasoning for a Trust & Inspire style of leadership, along with practical pathways of implementation Take a look at these **Book Notes** to get a glimpse of its value.

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Title: Trust and Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others

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Book Description:

We have a leadership crisis today, where even though our world has changed drastically, our leadership style has not. Most organizations, teams, schools, and families today still operate from a model of "command and control," focusing on hierarchies and compliance from people. But because of the changing nature of the world, the workforce, work itself, and the choices we have for where and how to work and live, this way of leading is drastically outdated.

Stephen M.R. Covey has made it his life's work to understand trust in leadership and organizations. In his newest and most transformative book, *Trust and Inspire*, he offers a simple yet bold solution: to shift from this "command and control" model to a leadership style of "trust and inspire." People don't want to be managed; they want to be led. *Trust and Inspire* is a new way of leading that starts with the belief that people are creative, collaborative, and full of potential. People with this kind of leader are inspired to become the best version of themselves and to produce their best work. *Trust and Inspire* is the solution to the future of work: where a dispersed workforce will be the norm, necessitating trust and collaboration across time zones, cultures, personalities, generations, and technology.

Trust and Inspire calls for a radical shift in the way we lead in the 21st century, and Covey shows us how.

Book Quotes:

Trust & Inspire is the new way to lead. Its goal is to unleash people's talent and potential—to truly empower

and inspire them—rather than try to contain and control them. It's about trusting people to do the right thing and inspiring them to make meaningful contributions. LOCATION: 235

Command & Control is about getting things done, but it misses the potential power of the people who get those things done. Command & Control is about being efficient with people, trying to motivate them instead of inspiring them. It's about self-interest and competing rather than serving and caring. And if all else fails, it's about barking out the orders so everyone does exactly what they're supposed to do—not because they want to, but because they have to. LOCATION: 241

Even when a leader is working toward a positive, beneficial outcome, a Command & Control approach leads to coercion, compliance, containment, and ultimately to stagnation. A Trust & Inspire leader, on the other hand, works toward that same beneficial outcome but does it through commitment, creativity, and the unleashing of talent and potential. LOCATION: 278

When we inspire other people, we breathe new life, purpose, and passion into them and us. We offer a new perspective, not only of their work and world but also of them as humans. Because we genuinely see greatness within them, they begin to see possibilities for themselves they hadn't previously considered—or even seen. They look beyond artificial limitations. LOCATION: 348

Inspiring others is among the most important of our life's works. LOCATION: 351

Command & Control might have gotten compliance from kids, students, and employees in the past, but it certainly did not spark creativity, excitement, inspiration, or commitment. LOCATION: 357

This workforce demands a new kind of leader—a leader who can see, develop, and unleash the greatness in every person. A leader who can model authentic behavior with humility and courage. A leader who can inspire others to willingly give their hearts and minds because they want to contribute meaningfully to something that matters. LOCATION: 375

All organizations today have two epic imperatives to achieve. First is the ability to create a high-trust culture that can attract, retain, engage, and inspire the best people—and thus win the ongoing war for talent. In other words, win in the workplace. Second is the ability to collaborate and innovate successfully enough to stay highly relevant in a changing, disruptive world. In other words, win in the marketplace. LOCATION: 497

Trust & Inspire is about seeing, communicating, developing, and unleashing the potential for greatness within people—tapping into what's inside. It's intrinsic; it's already there. Our job is to bring it out, to ignite the fire within, and to create an environment where that's possible and welcome. LOCATION: 517

Command & Control leaders operate under a paradigm of position and power. Trust & Inspire leaders operate under a paradigm of people and potential. LOCATION: 575

Trust & Inspire, on the other hand, is about garnering heartfelt commitment that's freely and enthusiastically given. Commitment is worlds apart from compliance, and it leads to a much higher level of engagement, innovation, and inspiration while creating far greater outcomes. LOCATION: 580

Command & Control is transactional—get the deal, finish the job, stop an undesirable behavior, and do it fast. That's the notion of efficiency shining through. Trust & Inspire is transformational—it focuses on building relationships; on developing capabilities; on enabling, empowering, and growing people. And the irony is that not only is this the far more enduring approach, it's actually the more efficient way to get things done as well. Remember this: with people, fast is slow and slow is fast. LOCATION: 583

While both management and leadership are vitally needed, we live in a world that is overmanaged and underled. LOCATION: 602

People won't stay at a job where they're being controlled or treated like a replaceable tool or component, as if they were exchangeable or replaceable. You can manage resources. You can manage systems. You can manage processes and procedures. But you cannot effectively manage people. LOCATION: 623

Nothing creates dependency faster than Command & Control, while nothing drives or lights the fire within like Trust & Inspire. We can sway people to action, or we can inspire them to greater performance. LOCATION: 716

People under Command & Control don't really collaborate, because collaboration requires risk, trust, and transparency. Instead, they coordinate; at best, they might be able to cooperate. In contrast, Trust & Inspire fosters conditions that allow people to move to a much higher level of true, creative collaboration where they voluntarily give and share. LOCATION: 844

A fundamental belief of a Trust & Inspire leader is that leadership is stewardship. Put another way, leaders are stewards. Stewardship is a responsibility that implies the highest level of trust, or being entrusted. LOCATION: 1245

Don't treat people according to their behavior; treat them according to their potential. LOCATION: 1345

Leadership is stewardship… so my job as a leader is to put service above self-interest. LOCATION: 1435

People who operate from a Trust & Inspire paradigm have a sense of stewardship about everything, including their time, talents, money, possessions, relationships, and family. Similarly, leaders who operate from this paradigm also have a distinctive sense of responsibility about their role as a leader, seeing themselves as stewards—as having a responsibility for the growth and well-being of those they serve and lead. LOCATION: 1444

Stewardship is not about being the boss; it's about having a job with a trust. It's about responsibility and serving others in order to achieve a greater outcome. It's about leaving something in better shape than when we stepped into our role. LOCATION: 1449

Enduring influence is created from the inside out…so my job as a leader is to go first LOCATION: 1467

Leading is about intentional influence—an influence that endures, even when the leader is not present. Such enduring influence is created and sustained from the inside out. LOCATION: 1468

When a drop of water drips into a larger body of water, the waves start at the inside and ripple outward. It's that way with people, too. The ripples—the enduring influence—always start with us. The influence then moves out to our relationships, then to our teams and organizations. And then to our stakeholders and the external marketplace. And then to all society. And the best way to create this kind of enduring influence from the inside out is to simply go first. LOCATION: 1472

Be the first to: … listen … admit you were wrong … be loyal to the absent … affirm and praise a wayward child … keep a commitment … hold yourself accountable … admit that you're unsure … take responsibility for poor results … create transparency when everyone else is operating from hidden agendas … tell the truth instead of creating spin … extend trust … give someone the benefit of the doubt … show respect … share difficult information … choose abundance … be courageous … clarify expectations … assume positive intent. LOCATION: 1491

Both character and competence are needed to have credibility. Each is necessary on its own, but neither is

sufficient without the other. LOCATION: 1545

My friend and colleague, leadership development expert Barry Rellaford, put it this way: “Leadership is not a popularity contest; it’s a credibility contest.” It’s better to be trusted than to be liked. LOCATION: 1555

Moral authority is not the same as formal authority, which comes with title or position. When you operate with care and consistently model uplifting behavior, you develop a moral authority that inspires others. LOCATION: 1557

Two towering, seemingly paradoxical qualities—humility and courage—are especially vital for us to model. LOCATION: 1620

Humility is a foundational virtue for all other virtues because it acknowledges that principles govern. The opposites of humility—arrogance, ego, and pride—teach us that we are in charge, so we put ego above principles. By contrast, humility teaches us that we should understand and live by principles, elevating service above self-interest. LOCATION: 1634

Humility is widely misunderstood today; it is often seen as weak, soft, timid, and passive—the opposite of what real leadership is. In truth, humility is enormously strong, firm, courageous, and active—the very essence of leadership. A humble person is more concerned about what is right than about being right, about acting on good ideas than having the ideas, and about recognizing contribution than being recognized for making it. LOCATION: 1638

We all lead three lives. Our public life is what everyone sees—what we put on social media, what we list on our résumés, what we present to the world. Our private life is how we act in our own homes with our family and closest friends. Our inner life is what we think and do when we are alone. To be truly authentic, we should try to make our three lives congruent. LOCATION: 1679

We’ve defined authenticity as being who you say you are. Vulnerability, then, is when you open yourself up for others to see for themselves who you really are. It is the act of being open and transparent. LOCATION: 1702

Declaring your intent involves opening your agenda, giving the why behind the what. It is a great practice in using vulnerability to operationalize authenticity. LOCATION: 1738

We unleash the greatness inside people through trusting them. Not blindly or indiscriminately trusting them, but smartly—with clear expectations and accountability. LOCATION: 1990

The very first job of a leader is to inspire trust, and the second job of a leader is to extend trust. LOCATION: 2007

At the end of the day, you can’t sustain trust without accountability. Holding yourself accountable first, in and of itself, models the behavior you’d like to see. You’re showing the way. It aligns beautifully with authenticity and vulnerability. It also takes humility and courage. When people—particularly leaders—hold themselves accountable, it encourages others to do the same. LOCATION: 2101

The overarching responsibility of any Trust & Inspire leader is to grow people. By contrast, the Command & Control leader focuses on fixing people. LOCATION: 2123

Trusted people will reciprocate not only by trusting you back, but also by following your example and extending trust to others—resulting in growth of both people and performance. LOCATION: 2205

Always remember this: no extension of trust is ever wasted, because its value does not lie in reciprocity but

rather in the very decision to trust. LOCATION: 2285

If people don't feel they are treated with respect, if they're not valued for their worth and potential, if they're not inspired by their parent or boss or colleagues, they will leave or simply check out. It doesn't matter how many perks or conveniences might be open to them if they stay—if the relationship is bad, people won't stay. A disengaged person stays but has mentally and emotionally quit. LOCATION: 2316

When we genuinely connect with people—when they feel like we "see them" and have real interest in them—that's inspiring. It's also inspiring when people feel connected to purpose, meaning, and contribution—to why what they're doing matters. LOCATION: 2360

Life is about contribution, not accumulation. LOCATION: 2549

There are five important elements that should be included when creating a stewardship agreement. The first three help clarify expectations. The final two establish practicing accountability.

1. Desired Results: What do we want to accomplish—and why?
2. Guidelines: Within what boundaries?
3. Resources: What do we have to work with?
4. Accountability: How will we know how we're doing?
5. Consequences: What are the implications if we do or don't achieve the desired results?

LOCATION: 2799-2861

The difference between a Command & Control leader and a Trust & Inspire leader, even if their actions are exactly the same, is that their behavior is interpreted completely differently, because it comes from a different place. To act decisively, or be firm, or be authoritative, or show "tough love" or discipline from an established Trust & Inspire style is completely different from attempting the same things when you're perceived as Command & Control. Your mindset and intent make all the difference, and your track record tells people loud and clear how to interpret your behavior. LOCATION: 3102

For example, if we don't trust people, they remain uninspired and uncommitted—perhaps complying to avoid punishment or to gain a reward, but never fully investing. All the while, they reciprocate that distrust right back at us. On the other hand, if we trust people, they tend to trust us back, want to perform, and rise to the occasion. When we trust people, they become more committed and engaged. In turn, it becomes easier to trust them. This creates a virtuous upward cycle of trust and confidence that inspires and actually creates greater trust and confidence. Trust is contagious. This is why I emphasize again that there is more control in a Trust & Inspire culture than a Command & Control, rules-based culture. LOCATION: 3342

If you really want to keep control as a leader, you can't do it with rules. You can do it by extending smart trust. LOCATION: 3374

Leaders increase their credibility through modeling the behavior. Leaders work from the inside out. Leaders go first. LOCATION: 3535

The basis for self-trust or self-confidence is your credibility—your character and competence—along with your moral authority. You don't have to be perfect, but you do need to recognize what you are capable of and work toward it. The more you build trust in yourself, the more you can extend trust to others. The more you believe in yourself, the more you can help others believe in themselves. LOCATION: 3536

Becoming a Trust & Inspire leader is first about becoming a Trust & Inspire person. That's applying the inside-out process to ourselves. LOCATION: 3903

Two extraordinary Trust & Inspire transition figures are illustrated beautifully in Victor Hugo's Les Misérables. After serving nineteen years of hard labor in prison for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving child, Jean Valjean is finally released on parole. When a woman sees him trying to find shelter, she tells him to go to the church, where he encounters Bishop Myriel of Digne. The bishop treats Valjean with kindness and dignity, feeding him and giving him a place to spend the night. Desperate and believing he has no other options, Valjean steals the bishop's silverware and flees under the cloak of night. He is quickly apprehended by the police, who return him to the bishop to face his punishment. In an astonishing display of mercy, the bishop welcomes Valjean and assures the police that he gave the silverware to Valjean as a gift, and goes on to say that he forgot to take the candlesticks as well—thus sparing Valjean an arrest and the inevitable return to prison. Once the two are alone, the bishop communicates to Valjean a belief in his own potential. Even after Valjean's term in prison, the bishop sees greatness in the ragged man—he sees the power that is in the seed; sees what hopefully someone else has seen in each of us. In that moment, the bishop becomes a powerful transition figure in the life of Valjean. His belief in Valjean changes the trajectory of his life. Inspired by the bishop, the second Trust & Inspire leader is Valjean himself. What happens next illustrates the ripple effect created by a Trust & Inspire leader, a phenomenon in which goodness spreads throughout the tapestry of connected lives. Valjean becomes a benefactor to countless souls in need—including becoming a kind, devoted father to the orphaned Cosette. He becomes the mayor of the town, and uses the wealth he amasses to finance orphanages, hospitals, and schools. Valjean becomes a transition figure in the lives of many, including Fantine, Cosette, Marius, and even his archenemy Javert. LOCATION: 4241

As humans, we all have a desire to become a transition figure in the lives of those we love. As leaders, we all have an opportunity, and perhaps even a stewardship, to become a transition figure in the lives of those we lead. The key to becoming a transition figure is to first become a Trust & Inspire person. LOCATION: 4256

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