Lemon Leadership

I found this book to be fascinating, insightful, innovative, and very helpful—*LEMON Leadership: A Radically Fresh Way to Identify Your Leadership Style*. Author Brett Johnson uses the acronym LEMON to present five different approaches to leading: Luminary, Entrepreneur, Manager, Organizer, and Networker. The construct is not only creative, but more importantly, it opens new windows of understanding about how leaders think and act quite differently from those with another style of leading. As a leadership coach, I find myself using both the concept and language frequently in working with clients.

Check out these Book Notes to gain an overview of a fresh take on how to think about styles of leading—both yours and those in your leadership circle.

Title: **Lemon Leadership:** A Radically Fresh Way to Identify Your Leadership Style

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Book Description:

LEMON Leadership will help you to identify which type of leader you are and show you how to apply your specific characteristics within your organization. Understanding these leadership types uncover keys to dealing with yourself and others in situations calling for different types of leaders.

Much has been written on leadership, but most writings focus on only two or three types of leaders. In LEMON Leadership, Brett Johnson expands our view of leadership to cover five distinct types of leaders: Luminaries, Entrepreneurs, Managers, Organizers and Networkers.

Book Quotes:

Luminaries—People who see the world through the lens of ideas, viewpoints, intellectual constructs, the "Why." LOCATION: 315

Entrepreneurs—People who see the world through the lens of opportunity, immediate needs to be filled, the "When." LOCATION: 318

Managers—People who see the world through systems, the practical workings, the "How." LOCATION: 321

Organizers—People who see the world through the lens of tasks to be done, people to be served, the "What." LOCATION: 324

Networkers—People who see the world through the lens of webs to weave, people to connect, elements to gather, the "Who." LOCATION: 327

The DNA of the leader shapes the texture of organizations quite significantly. Put a little differently, the tone, organizational structure, communication patterns and entire modus operandi of a corporation—whether a business or non-profit entity—is very different depending on which of the LEMONs is at the helm. LOCATION:

329

LEMON TRUISM: Unless the LEMON Leadership type and the fundamentals of the operating model are in sync, the leader or the organization will fail. LOCATION: 339

One of the fascinating things about LEMON Leadership is that there is a tendency for each of the leadership types to disregard what the others do as real work. LOCATION: 345

The art of leadership is to know what type of leader is needed in any situation, and then being free to adjust accordingly. LOCATION: 400

Luminaries are thought leaders, fresh thinkers who enthuse and empower others through the world of ideas. LOCATION: 405

Luminaries are able to intuitively envision future consequences of today's reality. LOCATION: 408

In the life of the Luminary, he/she is interested more in the reality that could be than in the reality that someone else has presented to him/her. LOCATION: 426

More often it is the ability to see principles at work in the past, understand today in light of such principles, and then make a clear statement about what this means for the future. LOCATION: 442

Luminaries inspire organizations with the power of an idea. LOCATION: 450

Luminaries think for work. They wrestle with ideas, they dialogue, they form perspectives, and they often write them down. LOCATION: 504

…Entrepreneurs believe that opportunities precede activities. (For the Luminary it was ideas that preceded activities.) An Entrepreneur can see opportunities where others see difficulties, challenges, opposition or… nothing. They are not starry-eyed about everything working out fine. LOCATION: 602

Entrepreneurs are opportunists in the most positive sense of the word. Where a Luminary creates their own card game, Entrepreneurs make the most of whatever hand they are dealt. It's not their job to figure out whether this is the most well thought-out card game in the world; it is their job to figure out how to win. LOCATION: 608

Where the Luminary inspires the organization through ideas, or exhausts the organization if they have too many, the Entrepreneur inspires the organization through their energy and enthusiasm. LOCATION: 624

Entrepreneurs care more about results – the Wherefore – rather than the Why. LOCATION: 643

Entrepreneurs identify needs, find ways to fill needs, and then find ways to design, build, market and manage those products. LOCATION: 646

LEMON TRUISM: Managers think that they are at the center of leadership, the only ones with a true grasp on reality, the truly sane ones at the party. LOCATION: 725

A healthy Manager will concur that there needs to be fresh thinking and a proper identification of opportunities. But Managers believe that the real work has yet to start. To them, proper planning precedes activities. The game doesn't really begin until you have a game plan. Anything you do before you have the plan is probably just activity, not to be confused with work. LOCATION: 736

Managers inspire through their concrete, feet-on-the-ground confidence. They command influence through their ability to deliver on promises and do what they commit to do. LOCATION: 750

Managers are deliberate. When dealt a hand they don't like, they systematically go about changing it until they have something that works. They won't reinvent the game. They will take the reality as it is and intentionally change it to something better over time. Once it is working, they leave it the way it is. LOCATION: 759

Managers have an understanding of what it takes to build an organization that will work effectively. As such, they would rather build a team to get the job done than do it themselves. LOCATION: 772

Taking an idea or an opportunity (both of which are a dime a dozen, in their books) and turning it into a detailed plan is one of the things that a Manager regards as real work. LOCATION: 798

Organizers are an under-recognized corps of people who don't fit into the traditional management and leadership molds, yet they are essential to the healthy functioning of any group. LOCATION: 842

LEMON TRUISM: Leaders are designed to be in teams where all five slices of the lemon are active and honored. LOCATION: 854

Organizers are very capable people who function with a high degree of instinct. They are often looked down on because they cannot explain why or how they do things, but they have a better sense than most about what it takes to actually get things done. LOCATION: 873

Unresolved things—whether tasks or relationships—are an Organizer's worst nightmare. LOCATION: 914

A final characteristic of Organizers is that they care about "When." Not "Why," "Wherefore," "How"…but the "What/When" combination. And the "When" for them is usually immediately. LOCATION: 916

LEMON TRUISM: Leaders have a perpetual responsibility to renew the Operating Model of the organization. LOCATION: 933

Analogies are usually incomplete, but a final way to understand Organizers is to think of the organization as a body, and you might say:

- The Luminary may be the brain.
- The Entrepreneur could be the heart and muscle.
- The Manager could be seen as the skeleton.
- The Networker is the nervous system, transmitting communications.
- The Organizer could be seen as the blood going back and forth through the body, cleaning up the junk, attacking intruders, spotting where things are dead, and bringing fresh life and energy where needed. LOCATION: 965

Networkers are the fifth essential leadership type— essential in the sense that they are a critical component of the makeup of any organization. LOCATION: 1018

LEMON TRUISM: Different leaders are better suited to different stages of the corporate lifecycle, but this does not mean it is best to replace the leader as the corporation progresses through its stages. LOCATION: 1026

Networkers are often the most likeable of the LEMONs. They have an ability to connect with people and draw them into their relational orbit quickly and warmly. LOCATION: 1039

Networkers are people oriented in a way that makes it easy for others to connect with them. They make people feel special and are usually good at verbal affirmation. LOCATION: 1065

In difficult times when tough choices have to be made, you can see quite clearly what it is that a leader protects. This will tell you much about who they are. LOCATION: 1209

Luminaries protect their ideas. They would rather lose the publisher than change the score, jeopardize the client than change the architecture, forego market share than compromise the design. They would rather die than compromise their view of the truth. LOCATION: 1213

Entrepreneurs protect opportunities. They will nurture an opportunity until it grows to have a life of its own. LOCATION: 1217

Managers protect policies, procedures, processes and established practices. Before you write them off as boring, realize that they have worked hard to figure out efficient and effective ways of getting things done so they are not about to let every new employee come along and mess with the way things are done. They know how things work, and they protect the mechanisms that keep things working smoothly. LOCATION: 1221

Organizers are a little more complex. When things are going well they are loyal to a key leader that they support (if they are not the #1 person in the organization) and they see themselves as the protector of that leader, often shielding them from many day-to-day annoyances. Should things, in their view, go wrong, then the Organizers protect themselves. LOCATION: 1226

Networkers protect their network … their Rolodex or address book, their web of relationships. LOCATION: 1231

Every day initiatives get killed in corporations simply because a decision maker concludes, “This is not my thing. It is not important to me.” Yet many of those initiatives are exactly what the organization needs to be healthy and effective. The truth is that the leader who killed the initiative was reacting based on their identity instead of responding out of a complete view of healthy leadership. Next time think twice before you happily cut someone else’s baby in half. The higher one climbs the ladder, the more rungs there are marked “ego” and the harder it is to separate things driven by our personal identity versus the true needs of the organization. LOCATION: 1280

An effective leader is an integrated person who has no problem giving weight to the mind, the activities and the feelings simultaneously. We will therefore look at the intellectual, practical and emotional strengths (or Head, Hands and Heart strengths) for each leader. LOCATION: 1350

Like Entrepreneurs, Luminaries can envision new products, systems and projects–even new societies. They can see something where there is nothing. LOCATION: 1382

If Luminaries can sense the veracity of ideas, Entrepreneurs can intuitively sense the viability of opportunities. For them, opportunities are the main thing, not ideas. LOCATION: 1414

Entrepreneurs have a high tolerance for risk; they are not afraid of failure. Good entrepreneurs will correctly determine risks, do what they can to minimize them, and then move forward with a bold plan despite the remaining risks. LOCATION: 1420

Entrepreneurs have the ability to move at a rapid pace from one opportunity to the next. LOCATION: 1426

Entrepreneurs do anything: they figure out the office (or garage) space, interview staff, design logos, articulate vision, set up the financial records, define corporate values, take out the trash … you name it. They do this not

because they relish the work but because they are willing to do whatever it takes. LOCATION: 1436

Entrepreneurs do not have failures, they just have “learning experiences.” Entrepreneurs bounce back. They are resilient, refusing to wallow in setbacks, not allowing their hearts to get discouraged. LOCATION: 1450

Sticktoitiveness. Managers have it in spades. Where Luminaries and Entrepreneurs love doing things the first time, Managers love working out the kinks and building a team of people who can get it done again and again and again. Managers, when honest, are more comfortable the third time round. LOCATION: 1454

Managers usually have the best understanding of organizational processes and procedures. They can define a process that will ensure a predictable result. Then they can build a skilled team to execute the process repeatedly. They have a high OQ—Organizational Quotient. LOCATION: 1468

Finally—and this could be a Head, Hand or Heart strength—Managers have what I call The Reality Index set to True North, to center. They have the most grounded sense of what is real. The Luminary and Networkers are too optimistic. The Organizers are too pessimistic. The Entrepreneur could go either way. But the Manager is the sane one at the party. LOCATION: 1506

While Luminaries (in particular) and even Entrepreneurs and Managers can be comfortable in their paper plans for a season, Organizers know that if A, B and C don’t get done this week, all those plans will be worthless. LOCATION: 1514

Organizers are often good at and content with temporary fixes. While this would drive someone else crazy, it works for the Organizer. LOCATION: 1529

At the heart level, Organizers are quick to embrace the dreams and opportunities and plans of others. Once their basic, practical questions have been put to rest, they trust that the others have done their job thinking it through, and they take ownership quickly. LOCATION: 1540

Networkers understand what makes people tick. When they come into a group they are quick to fathom the interpersonal dynamics, where the people are in regards to the agenda, and who is in charge. They know who makes the real decisions, and they work their way into the confidences of such people. They find out what people need—whether friendship, knowledge, information, alliances, a cup of coffee—and become the source of provision. LOCATION: 1566

Even on a good day we will have weaknesses, so we must understand them if we are to mitigate them. Weaknesses of LEMONs are not sinister; they are tendencies to be noted and worked against even when we are doing a good job as leaders. LOCATION: 1635

LEMON TRUISM: The defining strength that gives impetus to a person, organization or movement in the early days can become the Achilles heel. LOCATION: 1643

For all the thinking done by Luminaries, it is easy for them to become narrowly focused on their own ideas. They can lose the thread of what others are thinking as they become reclusive, particularly if they do not deliberately relate to a broader audience. LOCATION: 1646

Another weakness of Luminaries is Warp Speed. It may be a strength when you are working at a laboratory bench or buried in research, but when you are a leader of an organization it is generally a weakness. Leaders serve, and you cannot serve others if they cannot keep up with you. You are only leading when you have some people following you. A confused group squinting at the horizon where they thought they last saw your dust, is not a following. LOCATION: 1661

Some Luminaries, like Entrepreneurs, are intense. Furthermore, some are intensely fast, and others are intensely deep. A weakness of Luminaries is assuming that everyone else has the same intensity as they do, and they therefore don't adjust the 'clock speed' or 'depth charge' to that of their colleagues. LOCATION: 1679

Entrepreneurs are really good at some things, and a key to their success is selling those few things to investors, customers and employees as if they are everything. LOCATION: 1713

Entrepreneurs seldom fail; they just have learning experiences. LOCATION: 1724

Entrepreneurs can fake skills when they have to, and if this becomes a habit, it can mean that they fail to grow skills. The good Entrepreneurs know their craft and are students about their work and deliberate in skills development. LOCATION: 1737

LEMON TRUISM: Using people to build organizations isn't half as fulfilling as using organizations to build people. LOCATION: 1756

Managers do not like 'failure' because it makes them seem like they haven't done their planning. They pride themselves on planning, so when something goes wrong they can be tempted to suppress the bad news if it makes it seem that they didn't do their planning. LOCATION: 1772

Many Managers fail to grasp that processes, policies and procedures are there to free people up to be all that they should be. When Managers think that their job is to enforce the procedures, then they become rigid and force others to play by the rules (which the Manager wrote, of course). They can catch people on technicalities ("The Expense Policy says…") better than anyone. Managers can use Policies, Processes, etc. as a big stick rather than as a safety net. They can become more engrossed in the letter of the law than the spirit of the law. Sometimes this is essential, but often it is a matter of "control on steroids." LOCATION: 1781

LEMON TRUISM: The real job of someone skilled in processes is to continually refresh them so that the processes make life easier for highly motivated people to do and be their best. LOCATION: 1786

Managers care about people, they develop people, and they can have lifelong best friends. But their directness and no-nonsense approach can cause others to perceive them as being cool and calculating. LOCATION: 1790

Managers can set high expectations that no one can meet. We are not talking about interpersonal relationship expectations where people are hoping for the perfect boss, wife or spiritual leader. We are talking about performance expectations where the Big M is looking for 100% performance. LOCATION: 1807

For all their ability to focus, Organizers need to guard against the danger of dropping the ball in multiple areas when they are zoned in on the task at hand. The downside of the ability to focus is a lack of consideration for the schedule of others, and a neglect of the other responsibilities that they carry. So if an Organizer has decided that the most important task to them is wrapping gifts for a party, they can completely zone out any other jobs and people aside from that singularly "important" task. LOCATION: 1814

Organizers are great at spotting issues, but when they cross the line to the dark side they can just as easily create issues where there are none (in order to be indispensable or in control). They can take molehills and turn them into mountains quicker than anyone can come up with a plan to move the mountains. LOCATION: 1824

Because Organizers are happy to serve and get a kick out of spotting a problem and fixing it, they can fail to put boundaries around their job. This can cause them to get burned out, and this is bad enough. What is worse is that they can meander into everyone else's work. Few things are off limits to an Organizer who roves around finding blockages in the corporate plumbing and shoving hand grenades up the pipes to fix things. LOCATION:

1827

Another of the heart weaknesses of Organizers is that they get in the middle of emotional topics. They mistake their strength in understanding people's feelings as being a license to become the emotional filter between different layers of the organization. They entrench their position as trusted aid by having people come to them rather than "bother the leader." Or instead of just recognizing discord and resolving it, they plant seeds of discord and fuel it. LOCATION: 1857

Networkers can be way out in right field—the Luminaries already have left field covered —when it comes to assessing reality. The glass-twice-full tendencies of Networkers together with their exuberant belief in good things happening, tends to dull the edge of critical thinking. LOCATION: 1876

Networkers need to be liked. The effect of this is that they have an aversion to delivering bad news. LOCATION: 1945

Networkers like everyone to be happy, they like to keep the peace, and they are prone to avoiding confrontation. They are not great at administering discipline or corrective action. LOCATION: 1954

Networkers say what they think you want to hear: it is more important to be liked than to tell it like it is. LOCATION: 1990

LEMON TRUISM: A Networker has time to do whatever a Networker wants to do. LOCATION: 2004

If we want any LEMON to remember what we say, then we should communicate in their LEMON language. This means figuring out what they hear and don't hear. LOCATION: 2184

Blowing smoke at Managers is a bad communication strategy; they are born with sensitive smoke detectors. LOCATION: 2283

Managers want to know that there is heart in an idea, a passion behind the proposal. But they want the passion in support of truth, so make sure that you build a track record of substantiated facts in your communications with a Manager. LOCATION: 2326

Organizers are not usually long on formal communications. They have little regard for fluff and formality, particularly when it is disconnected from the facts as they see them. LOCATION: 2348

Networkers are good at opening gates, but not so good at closing them. They initiate communications with lots of people; they are not as good at closing the communications. They therefore leave lots of loose ends unless they are in hot pursuit of a specific objective. Stated another way, when they need information they are dogged. When they owe others a response, they are elusive. LOCATION: 2387

My wife, Lyn, says, "People like people who make them feel good about themselves." Networkers have the knack of doing this, and meaning it while they do so. People therefore love being around a Networker. They keep the conversation going and give life an easy flow. LOCATION: 2405

If the organization were a car, the Networker would be the grease that keeps things lubricated; perhaps the Entrepreneur would be the engine, the Manager the chassis/structure, the Organizer the fuel system or electronics, and the Luminary the headlights. LOCATION: 2407

LEMON TRUISM: We were made for interdependence, not independence. Even our leadership is designed to be as part of a team. Plurality of leadership is the norm for effective leadership. LOCATION: 2532

LEMON TRUISM: If you fail to align the operating model to your leadership type in your first two years in office, it's just a matter of time until the organization rejects your leadership. LOCATION: 2555

For the most part, our dominant wiring as a LEMON can become a weakness if we fail to grow in areas less comfortable for us. LOCATION: 2564

To be effective in plural leadership one has to understand several things:

- There is a difference between position and influence.
- There is an authority of influence that accrues to leaders who consistently exercise capable leadership with integrity.
- One can have equality of value and difference of function. LOCATION: 2752

LEMON TRUISM: The best teams are those comprised of strong leaders with definite and distinctive abilities representing the entire LEMON spectrum, and having a code of leadership that honors each other and recognizes the calling of one to be a leader among equals. LOCATION: 2759

LEMON TRUISM: A new leader who fails to adapt the organization to their leadership type will fail. LOCATION: 2872

Nothing kills an organization quite so quickly as someone in leadership getting away with violating the corporate values. Compromise on this, and things begin to unravel. LOCATION: 2937

All of us LEMONs have a dark side to our leadership. This is generally a truism of human nature, and specifically a truism of leadership. No leader is without fault, so the occasional straying from the bright side is understandable and acceptable provided it is acknowledged. LOCATION: 3043

LEMON TRUISM: Having gained a better understanding of what type of leaders we are, we can recognize how different situations call for different leaders; we can learn to exercise the leadership gifts of the appropriate LEMON in any circumstance. LOCATION: 3426

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