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Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success [review] / Livermore, David A.

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company or organization without Level 5 leaders on the wheel (p. 117) (Review, p. 117). Are these “Level 5” leadership qualities not the same with what in Christian leadership is known as “Servant Leadership,” which also is based heavily on humility?

The role of leadership, like many other roles, is not without trials or tests (crucibles), but how the leader views the crucibles and reacts to them is what makes the difference. According to Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas (Chapter 6), leaders who move from good to great view crucibles as transformative events from which they learn. There are four skills which will enable leaders to learn from hardship: engage others in shared meaning, have a distinctive and compelling voice, have a sense of integrity, and have an adaptive capacity.

It is the combination of hardiness and ability to grasp context that, above all, allows a person to not only survive an ordeal, but to learn from it, and to emerge stronger, more engaged, and more committed than ever. These attributes allow leaders to grow from their crucibles, instead of being destroyed by them—to find opportunity where others might find despair. This is the stuff of true leadership (Review, pp. 112-113). (pp. 112-113)

Another quality that differentiates great leaders from good ones is what most developmental psychologists call their “action logic”—how they interpret their own behavior and other people’s behavior, and how they react when their power or safety is challenged. According to David Rooke and William Torbert (Chapter 8), seven developmental action logics function as a leader’s dominant way of thinking. These include opportunist, diplomat, expert, achiever, individualist, strategist, and alchemist. Alchemist is the best action logic a leader can have, but very few leaders have this quality. Next to the alchemist is the strategist. These two are highly effective change agents.

The Harvard Business Review has done a good job in developing this book. It is written in clear and easy to understand language. After each chapter’s introduction, there are two sections called idea in brief and idea in practice. The first section gives the overview of the chapter while the second gives an elaboration of the main points of the chapter. These help the reader to better understand what the chapter is all about, and to follow the facts easily as he/she reads. The strength of the book lies in the fact that all the ideas discussed in it have been tested and proven effective by research, and that the ideas and the skills discussed have a universal application. The weakness of this book lies in the fact that it has no introduction or preface. Although the ten collected articles could each stand alone, the editors still ought to have introduced the book to the readers to give them a glimpse of what is inside. Nevertheless, the book is a masterpiece summary on leadership, one that I recommend to all who lead or aspire to lead.

LEADING WITH CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: THE NEW SECRET TO SUCCESS

By David A. Livermore
Hardcover, 220 pages
Reviewed by UGOCHUKWU ELEMS

In Leading with Cultural Intelligence, David Livermore states that about 70% of cross-cultural ventures end up in failure. Any statistical report with such a percentage of failure obviously commands attention. It is upon this
backdrop that Livermore highlights the significance of leading with cultural intelligence from the outset. After all, leaders generally harbor a desire to lead their people or organization toward enhanced performance, better decision making processes, international expansion, reduced stress, personal fulfillment, and flexibility. In this book, he endeavors to illustrate how an individual or corporate organization can thrive across ethnic, national or international boundaries. He contends that cultural intelligence can be acquired through training and practical experience by anyone who perceives the need and is willing to learn. Therefore, he believes there is always room for improving upon one’s ability to function across multicultural boundaries. Livermore combines the results of empirical research and professional experience to show how cultural intelligence (CQ) can facilitate success in cross-cultural transactions and associations. He identifies four steps: (1) Cultural Intelligence drive, the motivational dimension; (2) Cultural Intelligence knowledge, the cognitive dimension; (3) Cultural Intelligence strategy, the meta-cognitive dimension; and (4) Cultural Intelligence action, the behavioral dimension, all of which are crucial for success in cross-cultural ventures.

The book is comprised of nine chapters, subdivided into three major parts. The first part (Chapters 1 and 2) provides the rationale for cultural intelligence, its efficacy and a synopsis of cultural intelligence. Part 2 (Chapters 3-7) explores the heart of cultural intelligence by providing a detailed explanation of the four-dimensional model of cultural intelligence, which Livermore perceives as a basic tool for engaging in any cross-cultural or multicultural assignment. Part 3 (Chapters 8 and 9) introduces practical applications of cultural intelligence.

Cultural heritage is inherent in every human being; no one is without some form of cultural background from which he or she engages others and the environment. Unfortunately, everyone tends to be blinded toward their own cultural heritage and influences. Often we regard our individual cultures as the norm that norms all other cultures. The question “Can we please eat something normal tonight?!” posed by David Livermore’s daughter is not unique to her, for we often display similar attitudes and expressions. The problem is that such an expression assumes that whatever is done or accepted in another culture (in this case food) is not normal, because it is different from the culture of the one passing the judgment.

From the onset of the book, Livermore seeks to provide a basic understanding of cultural intelligence to successfully guide his readers. He concurs with Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne that cultural intelligence is “capability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures” (p. 24). Cultural intelligence is the tool that facilitates effective leadership and relationships across cultures. As noted above, Livermore believes that cultural intelligence is attainable via a four-dimensional model. The CQ drive entails intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and self-confidence that sustain a leader in a cross-cultural setting. This CQ knowledge enables a leader to understand cultural systems, norms and values. Cultural intelligence helps a leader utilize cultural knowledge in planning, interpreting situations and double-checking expectations, while cultural action enables the leader to act appropriately.

Livermore provides five reasons for
which cultural intelligence is critical: (1) it provides understanding of culturally varied customers, which is a common reality for most corporate or nonprofit organizations in the new global context; (2) it offers the tools needed to manage diversified teams locally and internationally; (3) it helps in the recruiting, developing and retaining of cross-cultural talent for local and international responsibilities in a world that has become global; (4) it helps with adapting leadership style; (5) it signifies respect for cultures that are different from our own.

Fortunately for readers, Livermore also gives advice for how to develop cultural intelligence. He proposes that readers be sincere with themselves, evaluate their self-confidence, eat and socialize with people of different cultures, count the benefits of cultural intelligence (such as career advancement, expansion of global network, profit and salary, creativity and innovations), focus on human welfare and environmental friendliness, take a taxi ride, stroll to the grocery store, go to a movie, visit a place of worship, learn a new language, go to a museum, role-play, and travel.

In order to effectively communicate and associate with people of a culture different from ours, we need knowledge of the cultural systems and the cultural norms and values of the culture in question. However, the reader is cautioned that “there are situations where the best option is not to adapt at all” (p. 155). This catches the reader by surprise, given Livermore’s strong passion for cultural intelligence and its adaptive nature. In addition, while he dwells heavily on the value and advantages of cultural intelligence, Livermore is honest to observe that acquiring cultural intelligence can be challenging in some situations. He does assure the readers, though, that despite the challenges, the benefits always prevail and serve as motivation for engaging in cross-cultural endeavors (p. 59).

In conclusion, suffice it to say that Leading with Cultural Intelligence is logically coherent and Livermore remains focused on the purpose of the book throughout. He addresses the fundamental issues of cultural intelligence by providing a concise understanding of it and of why it is crucial. He offers some practical examples of how it functions. His basic framework (the four-dimensional model) for developing and understanding cultural intelligence is strikingly simple, comprehensive and practical. Livermore is persuaded that, if followed, these steps can improve one’s ability to function in any cross-cultural setting. And it is consistent to say that in this book, Livermore accomplished his goal, namely, “to show you how to lead with cultural intelligence” (p. xiii-xiv). I strongly recommend this book to anyone (professional, leader or academician) who is involved or will be involved in any form of cross-cultural leadership, especially in today’s multicultural world.

CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: EXPLORING THE CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

By Michael A. Moodian (Ed.)
Paperback, 312 pages
Reviewed by MICHAEL ADOMAKO

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