

but it is still very much a part of the corporate world and the leadership challenges within it. Manville and Ober do admit that it is difficult to actually operationalize the ideal of citizenship in practice, finding the “right balance” between inclusiveness and exclusiveness as membership should be extended only to those with the “necessary” level of talent and commitment. To simply suggest that such membership is “yet another design choice” underscores my point about the power of hierarchy—people at the bottom will not be making that decision. While their vision of fundamental change through a dynamic mix of values, structures and practices is appealing, the Athenian ideal falls well short of being an effective paradigm for leaders in today’s knowledge age organizations.

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Joseph A. Raelin, *Creating Leaderful Organizations: How to Bring out Leadership in Everyone*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 2003, 290 pages, US\$22.95

What is it about ‘leadership’ that excites the minds of scholars and practitioners that so many of them, Joe Raelin being the latest, can continue to reformulate what this concept is really all about? Perhaps it is our tradition of being in awe of those who inspire us or who guide us to accomplishments we never thought possible. Perhaps it is from a sense of appreciation for those who lead that we continue to try to understand what they do and how they do it.

The more we write and read about leadership per se, the more we may be stuck in its traditional paradigm that equates leadership with individual competence or position. What Raelin makes clear (and argues for passionately) is that the value of leadership is not in ascribing it to some person or some defined or orchestrated role but in realizing it as a practice and skill. We are all capable of leaderful practice.

If our aim is to create organizations that endure and produce something of lasting value, then any concern for building leaders creates temporal value, while building leaderful organizations ensures long-term results. A leaderful organization is one where employees feel free to take action that is consistent with its mission. In effect, the model that Raelin presents in his book ‘transforms leadership from an individual property into a new paradigm that redefines leadership as a collective practice’ (p. 5). It is a paradigm that has parallels to other domains from empowerment to creativity. For example, in their recent book *Creativity*, Mauzy and Harriman (2003) claim that the key role of leadership is to foster systemic creativity and that everyone has the potential to be creative.

I do not know how much of this trend to diffuse responsibility for leadership or creativity comes from the impact of organizational downsizing, the pressures to increase productivity, or, as Raelin claims, the need for organizations to be more nimble and responsive to change. Perhaps it does not matter since our challenge is how best to respond to the trends in our environment. The trend that Raelin is riding is the move to expedite change and to get everyone involved in that process. There seems no better way to do this than to encourage all employees to act as leaders in their own domains. Workers need no longer wait to be led; formal applications for employment are still required but not for being leaderful.

Being a leader means that people turn to you for ideas, direction, inspiration, support, and hope. In a leaderful organization, individuals are encouraged to evoke some intrinsic source for behaviors, skills, and attitudes that are consistent with culturally defined versions (and visions) of leadership. Perhaps this trait is the inevitable development of what Peter Senge referred to as personal mastery. When we are masterful, we practice leadership and learning; the key for organizations is to have employees who are self-sufficient and self-assured.

To differentiate leaderful practice from traditional views of leadership, Raelin relies on four characteristics or contrasting, bipolar dimensions. It is not clear whether these dimensions are completely independent or where they come from, but they are provocative and they do create a useful template within which Raelin expounds on his ideas. The four tenets, as Raelin calls them, pertain to the experience of leadership in one or many places (*serial vs. concurrent*), the embodiment of leadership in one or many individuals (*individual vs. collective*), the role or style of leadership to direct and control rather than dialogue and collaborate (*controlling vs. collaborative*), and the sensitivity of leaders to the dignity of others (*dispassionate vs. compassionate*). Traditional, old-style leaders can be characterized by the first set of extreme categories (serial, individual, controlling, and dispassionate); Raelin labels this configuration ‘conventional leadership.’ The second contrasting set of categories (concurrent, collective, collaborative, and compassionate) typifies what Raelin highlights as ‘leaderful practice’ and what organizations need to move towards.

This contrast in styles is mindful of managerial choices to act on the basis of theory *X* versus theory *Y* assumptions. When that distinction was first highlighted by McGregor, many management pundits took it to mean that all managers should hold theory *Y* assumptions. What we have come to understand over time is that an informed choice is situational. In making as strong a case as possible for leaderful practice, Raelin does not elaborate on conditions that may yet call for conventional leadership. However, he does claim that today’s new forms of organization structure and the need for companies to promote creativity, flexibility, and rapid responsiveness to changing circumstances require leaderful practice. Companies do not have the luxury to wait for leaders on high to make decisions when their customers want immediate answers or when employees recognize problems or see precursors to accidents.

Raelin’s book is organized in a meaningful and helpful way—10 chapters grouped in two main parts followed by endnotes for each chapter. In Part I, Raelin defines and makes his case for leaderful practice

and explains how to get started. One way is to take his leadership questionnaire that is conveniently located in the book.

In Chapter 3, Raelin is wise to acknowledge early on that implementing leaderful practice requires change management techniques. Any company or organization will have its own orientation towards leadership, so to establish leaderful practice necessitates a shift in behaviors, if not fundamental values and embedded culture. Raelin discusses this shift in terms of 'leaderful development' and five types of changes that need to take place.

In Part II, Raelin describes and outlines a wide range of traditional practices that are aligned with the four main tenets of leaderful practice. For example, in explaining concurrent leadership (Chapter 6), he makes reference to and draws from the situational leadership model of Hershey/Blanchard. In discussing collective leadership (Chapter 7), Raelin brings in Block's notion of stewardship and Greenleaf's view of servant leaders. In the chapter on collaborative leadership (Chapter 8), he considers leaders as change agents who utilize different styles of negotiations, decision-making, and communications like dialogue.

Some of the materials in these chapters are dated (like Lewin's stage model of change, Thomas's modes of handling conflict, and Argyris's typology on learning). Yet I think it helpful that Raelin shows how existing theory and accepted techniques can be applied to build leaderful practice and leaderful organizations. Drawing on the past may indicate that leaderful practice is more evolutionary than revolutionary but may simply reflect its novelty. Raelin is unable to draw, at least for now, upon any rich history of leaderful practice. In that sense, it is a condition that we aspire to rather than can document extensively. The final chapter of the book (Chapter 10) offers tips on how to develop leaderful practice both for managers and employees. That should make the book appealing to anyone who works in the context of an organizational setting where issues of leadership, followership, control, and empowerment must be dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

To make his points, Raelin draws upon experiences, examples, and situations from a variety of well-known companies including Federal Express, GE, Hewlett Packard, and the New England Patriots (a most local angle to the author's Boston base). However, these references are more anecdotal than in-depth cases. What the book could use and hopefully would be included in the next edition is a detailed study or case example of an actual company or organization making the transition to being leaderful.

What Raelin proposes all sounds good, but is it actually doable, either incrementally or transformatively, and, if so, how? The challenge stems from our cultural images of leadership as embodied in strong, independent individuals and our belief, or fear, that any collective practice is somehow socialistic. As advocate and critic, Raelin makes his case with passion but acknowledges concerns and tries to address them. However, in that passion, discretion to determine what types of individuals, workteams, and organizations would constitute the best candidates for being leaderful is hard to find. Before we embark on making our organizations leaderful, it would be advantageous to assess where we have the best chance of being successful using some set of qualifying criteria.

Experts and thought leaders, like Raelin who encourage or are enamored with new forms of organization, management, or leadership may overlook the issue of benefits or assume them implicitly. However, a key challenge in the corporate world these days is specifying results and outcomes. While Raelin addresses the issue 'why leaderful practice' in Chapter 1, in fact, persuasive argument has limited success on non-believers. Reducing the uncertainty of who would benefit from leaderful organization and how much would help Raelin's case. For example, as a collective practice, does the payoff in being leaderful accrue to individuals or to organizations?

Perhaps the value of leaderful practice is found in the practice itself and not in the words to describe or argue for it. For that reason, I doubt we will see companies become or strive to become leaderful overnight. A better chance is that entrepreneurial risk-taking executives will read this book and apply some of Raelin's principles. I am not sure who or what organizations are ready to be leaderful, but a journey starts with a single step, and Joe Raelin has made a big leap. Now the question is: who is going to follow?

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