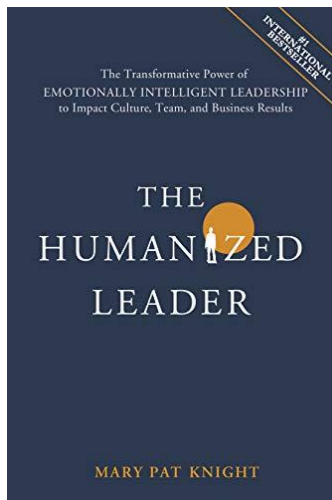




Book Review



The Humanized Leader: The Transformative Power of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership to Impact Culture, Team, and Business Results

Mary Pat Knight
Ignite Press, 2021
174 pages, softcover, \$17.95

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Self-awareness and emotional intelligence, the foundational skills of leadership, push oneself towards self-improvement by recognizing and managing one's emotions. By embracing the *whole* person in those around oneself, one is able to show up authentically and consciously as a humanized leader. The leader remains kind, factual, direct, and neutral. Mary Pat Knight provides her readers with the skills and mindset to lead through emotions, effectively communicate, and develop emotional intelligence in her book *The Humanized Leader*. Throughout the 12 chapters, Knight teaches the reader how to develop emotional intelligence, successful leadership, and a transformative culture in the workplace.

The humanized leader should maintain a healthy combination between traditional and modern leadership styles as there is a happy middle ground between the two. The traditional leader can be categorized as manager, task and process focused, direction oriented, a doer, and performance based. The modern leader is seen as a people and procedure focused leader that prioritizes inspiration, quality of being, and presence. The modern leader should implement the management aspects of the traditional leader to create a healthy balance. This leader does not need a title to implement a successful leadership style. Positional power is power with a title but no leadership qualities. One in positional power utilizes his/her authority to manage, which inhibits engagement in the workplace. Personal power, on the other hand, is power from the inside out that is rooted in leadership qualities. With a combination of traditional and modern leadership styles, in addition to personal power, the leader successfully influences.

Emotions, natural parts of the human experience, should be accepted in the workplace, because the humanized leader knows that by embracing the *whole* person this also includes his/her feelings. Emotions need to be recognized, managed, and constructively expressed. With conscious thought, the humanized leader should be careful to respond to the emotion rather than

react thoughtlessly. This becomes difficult when encountered by a trigger, which stimulates an emotional response. Triggers, both positive and negative, will always exist and must be accepted. Recognizing and acknowledging emotional triggers is key to preventing reactive behavior and allowing for de-escalation, release, and moving forward. Understanding one's triggers and emotions increases self-awareness, which improves emotional expression and self-confidence to choose a productive behavior. When triggers are not managed appropriately, conflict can arise often stemming from the drama triangle (the villain, victim, and hero). This cyclical triangle skews everyone's sense of accountability by shifting it onto the next person. An event occurs, which prompts a response or reaction, and ultimately results in an outcome. To produce the most beneficial outcome, the humanized leader must remain calm, neutral, and deliberate when making decisions. To remain emotionally intelligent, emotions must be recognized and managed appropriately. This creates an emotionally productive relationship and a safe environment that "promotes the desire to risk, be bold, be honest, and achieve outstanding results" (Knight, 2021, p. 23).

Along with emotional intelligence, Knight enforces the concept of communication leadership, because communication is paramount to successful relationships. Good communication is rooted in a true sense of caring, honest curiosity, and active listening. It is important to listen (with the body, mind, and heart), ask questions to build trust, and regularly implement listening cues. Knight says, "Listening, like leadership, is presence, not performance" (Knight, 2021, p. 65). Remain present when listening and avoid listening to speak. Listening to speak prevents full understanding and allows assumptions and judgements to get in the way. Active listening allows for a response that is formulated in a customized communication style to that particular person. Customizing one's own communication to the listener strengthens trust, increases cooperation, addresses communication breakdown, and increases influence. Communicating healthy feedback promotes motivation and change or improvement in employees. Feedback, *not* criticism, should be focused on behavior, rather than personality to format the feedback as a learning process. Reinforcing feedback creates the most motivation when compared to redirecting feedback. The humanized leader needs to provide feedback to *all* employees equally (even the above average-performers) because "Even the hardiest of plants wither and die without water" (Knight, 2021, p. 90). Effective feedback creates a safe culture for learning and improvement. Employees feel empowered to achieve their goals to create positive outcomes. Communication leadership is practiced through active listening, customizing the communication to the listener, and providing effective feedback to all employees.

Performance Leadership creates a culture of accountability, where people are "answerable to effort and outcome" (Knight, 2021, p. 101). The humanized leader sets clear expectations, checks in, and follows up on those expectations. All employees remain accountable for their responsibilities and agreements. An agreement followed by a clear expectation "is the greatest tool you have in creating a culture of accountability: Solid agreements are the foundation for trust" (Knight, 2021, p. 109). Trust is maintained through commitment and honesty.

Lastly, Knight discusses genius leadership which is leading with a purpose. One's purpose is derived from values, experience, and acknowledgement of what the individual wants to contribute. These values determine the way decisions are made and promote integrity keeping. The genius leader also acknowledges and understands the genius in others. Knowing the genius in others allows the humanized leader to appropriately delegate in a way that engages the positive qualities in other people. The humanized leader knows that appreciation trumps praise. Honest appreciation creates vulnerability on both sides and enhances the human connection. By

investing in one's employee relationships through genius leadership, humanity is appreciated and restored.

The Humanized Leader provides readers with a guide to developing oneself and his/her teams through conscious leadership, emotional management, effective communication, a culture of accountability, and an understanding of the genius inside oneself and others. Knight provides her readers with checklists, charts, personal examples, exercises, and linked resources on her website throughout the text. Mary Pat Knight is the founder and CEO of Leaders Inspired, a speaker, coach, and author with thirty years of experience in marketing, operations, and human resources. Her expertise and experience helped create this leadership guide that is both practical and beneficial not just for those in positional power, but also for those in personal power to become the most humanized leader possible.