

The Essential Guide to *Your* Leadership

Future Engage Deliver

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Welcome

One of my great passions is helping people grow as leaders. Why? Because I've seen so often the difference that quality leadership can make to the lives of people and the success of organisations.

I've written this book with the sole purpose of helping you develop faster as a more confident, capable leader. The only qualification you need is the desire to grow.

It absolutely doesn't matter where you are in an organisation. You can be in your first job, you can have no direct reports. You can have a team or run a department. You can head an organisation. And it can be the local parish council or a global giant. It really doesn't matter because I've seen inspiring leadership from people in all these positions and I've realised that the fundamentals of leadership are the same for any situation.



Welcome

We'll explore these fundamentals together in this book and I'll share with you the ideas and practices I've seen have most helped people grow as leaders. You'll learn more about the leader you are now, the leader you want to be and the ways of getting there, even if you don't yet fully think of yourself as a leader.

What I'll bring will come from my journey as both a leader and partner to other leaders. After my early years in Wigan in the north of England, at Oxford University and then Procter and Gamble, I moved to the US to be a chief executive in a multi-national business before returning to the UK.

I then realised that who I wanted to be was a great partner to leaders. So for close to twenty years now, I've been a leadership coach and consultant to individuals, teams and organisations of all shapes and sizes.

I've learned lots from reading other books on leadership but my most enlightening learning has come from sitting alongside leaders in 'live' situations as they have worked at engaging and mobilising others. I have captured what I've learnt in my proven approach to developing leaders, *Future – Engage – Deliver*.

I've seen that there is real value in keeping messages straightforward and practical. And this is what I'll do in this book.

This 'leadership stuff' really needn't be complicated. I believe that leading is a natural, human activity that is a part of all of us. You don't need a certain IQ or job title to be a leader!

But there is something you do need. You need to be 'up to something'. That is, you need to have an ambition or dream or goal for your team, organisation, colleagues or yourself and it's got to matter to you.

I've been a partner to hundreds of leaders and this has been the only common feature among them - whether we've been focussing on private or public sector challenges, in crisis or quieter times, on a local or global scale - the leader has wanted a different future and was determined to do something about it. He or she was 'up to something' that mattered to them.

At this moment, you may not be clear on what you're 'up to'. That's perfectly ok. I'll help you get clearer on this.

Or you may be pretty clear on what's important to you and what you want but you don't know how you're going to make it happen. That's ok too and has been the case at sometime with everyone I've worked with.

Or you may not even allow yourself to think about the future because you're not confident you can influence it. Well, I'll encourage you to throw yourself in, try new approaches, experiment, practise and learn. In particular, I'll urge you to be really open to learning about yourself, and understand what it is about you that brings people with you and makes things happen. And also how you at times hold yourself back and so limit what's possible.

The result of you taking this approach is that you are guaranteed to become an even more confident and effective leader. However, you cannot grow fully as a leader overnight. It's something that takes time. My ambition is to be your partner in this endeavour. So please do not think of this as just a stand-alone book to be read once. There will be value in you returning to it often. Here's how I suggest you best use the book:

First read at least the next chapter to get an overview of the topic of leadership.

Welcome

I believe one of the factors holding many of us back from growing as leaders is that we don't have an overall grasp of what it's all about. Many of us have a number of ideas about leadership without seeing how they all fit together.

Second, when you're ready, read the book to identify what sort of leader you want to be and how you currently are as a leader. You will be naturally strong and not so strong in some aspects of leadership – that's how we all are. Get a sense of this as you read and begin clarifying how you want to grow.

Third, dip in at any time when things are not going well. Use this book to help you identify what's going on and what aspect of leadership is missing – I promise you the answer's in here!

Also use the book when things are going well. That way you can learn about what's really making things work and you can then take this learning to other situations.

Also, this book is just one part of supporting your ongoing development. For instance, at the book website at www.futureengagedeliver.com/book you'll find copies of the key pages of the book which you can print off to carry as prompts or share with colleagues. You'll also find quotes and articles and links to books that have inspired me and which may inspire you too. And you can subscribe to receive regular features and reminders about

Future – Engage – Deliver.

And please don't keep this stuff to yourself. Part of what you care about may be helping others to grow as leaders. In which case, get them involved. Talk to them about what you're learning. Help them get in touch

LEADERSHIP Plain and Simple

with what they care about and how they'd like to grow as leaders. Steer them to the webpage. Give them a copy of this book!

Also finally, let me hear back from you. If you have comments or stories to share, please send them to me. And if you want more support, there is a team of us who can support you by phone or come to see you.

I've distilled my learnings about leadership into a simple yet powerful framework, *Future – Engage – Deliver*. It captures the very best ideas and practices of how to grow faster as a leader. The book brings it to life so that you can make it real for you and rapidly accelerate your development as a leader who makes a difference.

Future Engage Deliver

“...there are only three aspects to leading that you’ve got to grasp. They are Future, Engage, Deliver.”

Inside:

Future–Engage–Deliver

- First, leading always starts in the Future
- Second, if you want the help of others to create that Future, you’ll have to Engage them
- And third, in Deliver, you make things happen

What do you see about your Organisation?

What do you see about You?

Future – Engage – Deliver

In this chapter, you'll see that all this 'leadership stuff' needn't be as complicated as it's often made out to be. And you'll see that you already have what you need to be an effective leader.

Boy, have I been slow?! For years, I've read all the latest books on people, leadership and organisations.

Why? Because I've been seduced into thinking that this leadership stuff is really complicated, even mysterious. And I believed I'd have to do lots of reading to really 'get it'.

A major error! In contrast, when I've reflected on what was it about the leadership that switched on that board, project team or warehouse operator, I've recognised that there have always been three ingredients at play:

Future – Engage – Deliver

This is the model I have proven in use with leaders the world over. It has consistently been the catalyst for leaders who have wanted to accelerate their own and others' growth. It really is that simple – I promise you that you'll find a place for any leadership idea you come across inside this framework.

The fact is that whether you want to organise a great birthday party, create a high-performing team or help build a society that prospers, you will need to practise these three aspects of leading.

Of course, it may not be easy to be brilliant at all three aspects, but I promise you that these ideas are all you need to ‘get’ in order to grow your leadership. Let me explain.

First, leading always starts in the Future.

Leading always starts with ideas and thoughts about what you’d like to see in the Future, how you’d like things to be, where you’d like to get to or what you’d like to build.

We have many words to describe these ideas; they include ‘goal, target, ambition, aspiration, dream’ and from the world of business you can add words like ‘vision, mission, direction and strategic intent’. These are all ways of describing the Future you want.

I’ll say a lot more about Future later but let me be absolutely clear right now

Powerful and effective leaders are guided by the Future that they want. And more than this, the leader is strongest when that future is powerfully connected to what he or she cares about.

Why does this matter? Because the more commitment the leader has for the desired future, the more they will persist, the more energy they’ll bring along the way, the more they’ll stay ‘up to something’.

Additionally, when the leader has this powerful relationship to the Future they care about, it can also have an extraordinary impact on others ... sparking innovative thinking, giving people a reason to go the extra

mile, providing hope in times of difficulty and, most importantly giving meaning to people's work. In essence, a strong connection to the Future you want can create a mood of optimism, hope and possibility that can ignite human creativity and build confidence.

Second, if you want the help of others to create that Future, you'll need to Engage them.

That is, you will interact with them in a way that has them *want* to build the Future with you. Engagement is central to a leader's ability to build alignment, involvement, ownership, unity and team. Crucially, it is absolutely distinct from 'communicating to', 'presenting at', or 'telling'.

I am staggered that so many leaders still appear to believe that in order to get the best from others it's enough for them simply to 'transmit' their ideas or wishes. It isn't.

Engaging others is all about interaction and it's something that happens inside your relationships. To be fully effective, you'll need to engage people in yourself, as well as in the Future you want to create, and this calls for qualities like integrity, openness and consistency. When engagement occurs, not only is an enormous sense of possibility generated but people will be ready to knock down barriers as they pursue what they have helped to invent. What's possible for a group or organisation when people are really engaged can be immense.

And third, in Deliver, you make things happen.

This is where words like 'performance, execution, implementation and results' live. Leading doesn't stop with 'vision' or 'team'. It ends with delivery.

So for the birthday party, you start with ideas about how you'd like the party to be – you start in the Future. Then you chat with others you'd like to organise it with – you Engage them. Then you encourage and support them to make it happen, to Deliver. And if you're really being a leader rather than a doer, the other people who you've engaged will make most of it happen.

Whatever the ambition or goal, this is what's involved: **Future – Engage - Deliver**. You'll notice I don't dwell on leadership competencies or qualities. Rather I prefer to focus you on what you have to get done. If you want to be truly effective:

- you have to be guided by a Future you want,
- you have to Engage others, and
- you have to Deliver.

Let's get practical right now and start working with this framework by using it to look at your organisation and then you.

What do you see about your Organisation?

Have a look at your organisation through the Future – Engage – Deliver lens and consider these questions:

Future

- How strong is the sense of Future in your organisation? Is there an uplifting sense of purpose and ambition? Or is the focus more on analysing the past?
- Is there a sense of possibility in the air? Do people readily think about what could be achieved rather than what can't be done?
- Is there a feeling of optimism and hope? Is this strong enough to help people feel confident in the face of barriers?

Engage

- Are people engaged in and want to contribute to the goals of the organisation?
- Do they feel valued and involved?
- Do people look to engage colleagues or is it more a culture of 'communicate to and tell'?

Deliver

- Is your organisation strong at delivering what it sets out to?
- Are conversations about delivery full and robust, or do people 'go along' with what's being asked of them?
- Also are people helped to develop in order to increase the organisation's overall capacity to deliver?

Ask the same questions about your department, team and key individuals. What do you see about how strong the leadership in your organisation is and where it's coming from?

What do you see about You?

Now let's turn to you. There is something here I really want you to take on board. It is that each of these aspects of leading requires what I call **Leadership Muscles** and the really good news is that you already have the Leadership Muscles for each of the three essential aspects of leading that I've outlined.

Let's demonstrate this now:

Future Muscles

At times, you have ideas about how you'd like things to be in the Future; you imagine, you dream, you visualise; you have ambitions and aspirations. This is the Leadership Muscle at the core of the Future aspect.

Engage Muscles

Similarly, there are times and places in your life where you've interacted with others so they've wanted to help you and do things for you. You already have the Muscles needed to Engage others.

Deliver Muscles

And finally, there have been times when you have followed up with people and they have delivered for you. This may have been delivery on a large or small scale. Either way, you were using your Deliver Muscles.

Not all your Muscles may be strong. That's ok - I've yet to work with a leader who's been really powerful in all three aspects of leading. Feel good about and exercise the Muscles that are strong, and enjoy developing through practice the ones that are weaker. I'll show you how to do this as we go along and particularly in the next chapter where we'll look at how the leaders I've seen grow fastest do so.

In Summary...

Future – Engage – Deliver, it's as simple as that. Don't believe that this 'leadership stuff' is any more complicated whether you are leading a full organisation, a team or just yourself.

You already have all the fundamental Leadership Muscles. And you can grow them further with practice.



Rob Wilson: FED

Professor Robert Wilson, Medical Director and Surgeon at South Tees Acute NHS Foundation Trust. Robert is also Professor of Surgical Science in University of Durham. He's very grateful to have had a colleague introduce him to FED. He writes:

"I start a new job next month as Medical Director of the healthcare trust where I have been working as a consultant surgeon for well over 20 years. This has been the single most significant thing in my recent professional life. It has re-energised me and opened up a new library of leadership papers and books. And thanks to the help of my colleague, Peter Lees, who is a great believer in FED, I too have become an enthusiast.

I'm certainly going to need all the help I can get – as the most senior doctor in an organisation of near enough 1000 medical staff and more than 7000 staff in total – I will be responsible for leading my part in strategy and governance over the next five years or so.

But what of the really big leadership challenges that interested me in the job in the first place? For me to be really up to something and deal with these new challenges will require energetic application of all the principles of FED.

Already I am stretching some of the FED leadership muscles. I have a clear vision of the future, I'm past the starting gate and on my way. With this positive energy I know that I am engaging others in this future and see the challenge of the financial context that we face as a great opportunity for us all. I really know that so long as I keep practising stretching these Future and Engage muscles that we will Deliver – together! And finally I know that as a leader who is up to something big that I need to keep growing my support team – and I thank my senior colleague for coaching me on this exciting leadership journey.

How to turbo-charge your growth

“...some people grow faster than others. You get to choose the pace.”

Inside:

How to turbo-charge your growth

Make your practice Concious Practice

Build your Support Team

Know and Go beyond Your Limits

– Limit One: Not Believing You’re a Leader

– Limit Two: Not Being in Leader Mode

How to turbo-charge your growth

Some of the leaders I've worked with have grown in their confidence and ability a lot faster than others. This chapter shows you the approach to adopt if you want to grow that fast. I've identified three ways you can turbo-charge your growth.

They are:

1. Make your practice **Conscious Practice**
2. Build your personal **Support Team**, and
3. Know and **Go beyond Your Limits**.

1. Make your practice Conscious Practice

The research on leadership is totally conclusive that you do most of your learning and growing as a leader in real life situations, not on courses or reading books, and you grow fastest when you're taking on challenges that stretch you.

This is great news because it means you have opportunity to practise, learn and grow your Leadership Muscles every day. You don't need to wait until that next leadership course; you can develop while you're doing what you're doing.

In this regard, improving as a leader is no different to improving in many walks of life such as playing an instrument or a sport - the more you practise the better you get.

And the kind of practice that most accelerates learning and growth is Conscious Practice. That is, when you are consciously using situations and challenges as opportunities to learn and grow.

At its best, what this means is that you are conscious of how you want to be as a leader ahead of meetings, conversations or challenges; that you are aware of what's happening while you're in these situations, and are then pausing to extract learning afterwards. Even better, you'll be asking for feedback from others to learn even more.

Pause for a second now and check in on yourself:

- How clear are you that you have opportunities every day to practise being a leader?
- How regularly have you been grabbing those opportunities?
- What specific opportunities are coming up for Conscious Practice of your leadership?

The leaders I've seen grow fastest look out for these opportunities and what I'll do in this book is introduce you to some ideas that will help you extract more learning from your practice. These ideas will also help you identify which aspects of your leading you want to develop and how.

Through such Conscious Practice, you will build your confidence as a leader, want to take on bigger challenges and so grow your leadership even further.

2. *Build your Support Team*

Ultimately, your leading is completely down to you. But do not try to grow fast as a leader all on your own.

If you want to grow fast, it's essential you create your personal Support Team.

Here's the first reason. When the impact of leadership development programmes in eight different organisations was studied, one of the main findings clearly highlighted the power of receiving regular feedback from colleagues. The study by Goldsmith and Morgan in 2005 found that:

“Leaders who discussed their own improvement priorities with their co-workers, and then regularly followed up with these co-workers, showed striking improvement. Leaders who did not have ongoing dialogue with colleagues showed improvement that barely exceeded random chance.”

It's as stark as that. So consider shifting your view from 'these are people I'm working with' to 'these are some of the people who can help me be a much more effective leader'.

If you really want to accelerate your growth, here's what to do. You identify the specific ways in which you want to grow as a leader; you tell selected colleagues and ask them to rate you in these areas now; you then ask them if they'll watch out for you in these areas because you'd like to talk to them regularly about what progress you're making.

This help from your Support Team can be the difference between *“striking improvement”* and *“improvement that barely exceeds random chance.”*

The second major reason to have a Support Team is that they can help in other ways too. We are all human. We all have setbacks, moments of doubt, times when we want to get stuff off our chests or just disappear

and hide. With the help of others we can talk stuff through, get things back into perspective, have a laugh and re-energise ourselves.

So check in for yourself now:

- Do you have people to talk with who can help you get yourself back in shape?
- Who would you like on your Support Team who currently isn't there?
- What request will you make of people on your Support Team?

You'll already have people who help you like this. But think wider. Who else could be on your Support Team? Who else could help you believe more in yourself and spend more time being at your best? You may not find asking for help to be easy, but for your rapid growth as a leader it's essential.

3. Know and Go beyond Your Limits

Put simply, there are two ways to grow as a leader. One is to build your Leadership Muscles with the help of Conscious Practice and your Support Team. The other is to notice and then reduce the ways in which you limit yourself.

In particular, there are two major ways that I've seen people limit themselves as leaders - and I can promise you that at least one applies to you! See how strong these limits are for you.

Limit One: Not Believing You're a Leader

The other day, I was asked to do a session on someone else's leadership programme. The group of 20 managers from this high-profile organisation were pleasant enough but there was no spark, no buzz. When we looked into this, we revealed that even though they were on a leadership programme, most of them didn't see themselves as leaders!

What a waste of human potential. And this isn't an isolated case. I come across thousands of people who are held back just by the way they think about themselves and leadership. How has this come about?

My answer is that people have digested too much 'accepted wisdom' about leadership that is both out of date and seriously debilitating.

At its worst, this is how the story goes:

- Leaders are different from me; they are charismatic, probably heroic and perhaps even explorers!!
- In organisations, they are older and in senior positions; they may have been helped in getting there by going to the right school or university.
- These leaders have few doubts or insecurities. They are terrifically confident. They are somehow special.
- Also to be good at this leadership stuff, we can be seduced into believing we'll have to understand complicated theories and models, and generally be pretty bright.
- Oh and you'll also have to find the 'right' way to be a leader, the 'right' answer – how many years did I read books believing 'the answer' would be in the next one??
- And finally, leadership is a solitary journey, one you must do alone.

Of course this is a load of rubbish! But check in now to see whether you've been limiting your leadership potential until now by how you've been thinking about yourself. Consider these questions:

- What have you believed about 'leaders' and 'leadership'?
- What have you taken for granted and not stopped and really thought through?
- Who do you consider to be leaders, and who do you say are not?
- What do you believe it takes to be a leader?

- What are the characteristics you believe leaders must have?
- To what extent do you see yourself as a leader?

Overall, notice how strongly the way you think about leadership encourages you to see yourself as a leader and be a leader in your own right. You may be one of those not held back too much by this very common limit, in which case 'terrific'.

But if, like so many, you do have limiting beliefs around your own leadership then simply notice them and go beyond them. It's time instead to start focusing on who you want to be as a leader, what you're like when you're at your best and how you've been in those moments when you've been at your brilliant best.

Leading is a natural activity, a part of all of us, regardless of position, title, or place in the hierarchy. You already have the Leadership Muscles needed. You simply need to develop them through practice.

Limit Two: Not Being in Leader Mode

I've little time for endless debates about whether leaders are made or born. A far more useful angle that can help people grow as leaders is the idea that at times we are in our **Leader Mode** – times when we are at our best and making things happen - and times when we are not.

Take Jane for example. I worked with her when she was the successful chief exec of a division of a major company. She was then promoted into a prestigious global position.

Jane was a proven leader but one afternoon when I met her she certainly

wasn't in her Leader Mode. Her energy was flat, she'd lost sight of her ambitions for her team and her business, and she was bogged down in detailed analyses of past results.

Sadly, I've met thousands of people like Jane; people in leadership positions who've lost sight of themselves as leaders and have slipped back into what I call their **Operator/Manager Mode**, where their focus is on managing and doing, not leading.

I now believe that this characteristic is one of the major reasons why so many organisations perform way below what's possible.

What's going on here? This is what happens to some degree to all of us: in our early days at work we succeed by becoming effective Operators. We fix this and sort that. We are then promoted and start to develop a strong Manager Mode, in which we supervise other Operators.

Before long, we each have a well-honed Operator/Manager Mode in which we feel both competent and comfortable, and which we know has been one of the reasons for our success to date.

In addition, although organisations are asking the Janes of this world to lead, they can also put them under relentless pressure to review the past and manage the present, rather than focus on the future.

And this isn't all. Many Janes are not aware how fundamentally different it is to lead; so they can spend almost all their time in Operator/Manager Mode without realising it.

As a result even people as capable as Jane can spend more time than they want to in Operator/Manager Mode. Of course, we all need to spend time in all three modes.

However, I have yet to find anyone who at times doesn't slide back into Operator/Manager when being in Leader Mode is what is needed.

So pause here to think about what you're like.

- What do you notice about the ways in which you spend your time?
- How clear are you about what you're like in your Operator/Manager and Leader Modes?
- What has you slide into Operator/Manager when actually you don't want to?
- What do you notice about how your organisation encourages you to be in one mode or another?

Have no doubt, we all sometimes limit ourselves as leaders in this way, but happily there is something very simple we can do to know this limit and go beyond it. It's Conscious Practice! Simply raise your awareness of the times and places you want to be in Leader Mode but have slipped into Operator/Manager Mode, and choose not to be.

This is how you do it:

- Remember some times when you've been in Leader Mode, when you've been at your best. How did you feel? How would you describe your energy? What were you doing? (If you struggle to recall some times, ask colleagues from your Support Team to give you examples.)
- Now list those times and places that you are in Operator/Manager Mode – in which meetings and interactions; on which projects; with who else in the room etc?
- In which of these situations do you want to be in Leader Mode?
- What's your picture of how you want to be at these times? Create a mental picture that has you feel good and encourages you to be the

leader you want to be. You can draw on the memories of when you've been in Leader Mode.

- Then just ahead of these times, practise thinking about who you want to be.
- And then during these times, practise being who you want to be.

This is one of the ways you can grow as a leader immediately. Some building of your Leadership Muscles may take time. But some of your practice can make a difference straight away. Have a stronger picture of you being the Leader you want to be and simply practice being that leader in more situations more of the time.

In summary...

You can influence dramatically how fast you grow as leader. You can flex and build your Muscles everyday and you'll build them faster with the help of a Support Team. Also, be clear that you already have an effective Leader Mode. Get out there and practise it.