



Leading Minds: An Anatomy Of Leadership

Howard Gardner , Emma Laskin (With)

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"Leading Minds" addresses a crucial and often ignored component of leadership -- the mind. What distinguishes the mind of an effective leader, and what is the mentality of his or her followers? Gardner links the study of creativity with the study of leadership to demonstrate the many similarities between traditional creators (artists and scientists) and leaders in business, politics and the military. He argues that the key to leadership is the creation of an arresting story -- one that grabs the followers' attention and inspires them to greater efforts. In portraits of a wide range of leaders -- from Oppenheimer to Gandhi -- Gardner re-creates each of their stories, shows where each fits in the matrix of "leader archetypes," and reveals the ways in which they ultimately succeed or fail."Gardner elaborates a plausible typology of leadership and identifies several core characteristics of leaders....persuasive." "--New York Times Book Review" "Superb."--Warren Bennis, "Harvard Business Review"

"Once again, Gardner brings his brilliant intuition and analytic skills to the study of human excellence."-- Edward O. Wilson, Harvard University

Leading Minds: An Anatomy Of Leadership Details

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Don says

Profiles of different leadership styles - at the highest level, between those of direct and indirect influence - but then with other nuance built in. Gardner takes a sociologist's view on leadership and the outcomes as a result of different leadership styles. Readable and engaging as he discusses some of the great 20th century leaders and how they fit into his leadership framework.

Bernie May says

A bit thick and academic for my tastes, but thorough and thoughtful. Worth the read if you think deeply about leadership and its future directions.

Kevin says

What I liked most about this book is the brief biographies of each leader and how Gardner highlighted their qualities that mostly pertain to leadership. These are historical figures that I had always wanted to know more about and Gardner writes about them in a way that is useful to inspiring leaders. He is very explicit when writing about how his work can be useful to the reader (sometimes verges on repetitiveness). His findings were pretty straightforward with nothing groundbreaking, but if nothing else it was a very well-written synopsis of various leaders of the 1900's. I have always liked Gardner's works and would read more by him.

JOHN says

The life stories of the 11 selected leaders from diverse backgrounds, provide insight to the question of effectiveness and success in a multitude of leadership roles. The ability to conceptualize the work of leading through these stories. Presenting an opportunity to reflect on the elements of leadership, and the varying approaches to leadership in varying aspects of life.

The connection of 'lessons from the past, and its implications for the future' is very instructive for people assuming leadership roles, as well as those that are in current leadership positions. Providing a practical approach on the importance for leaders to know their story, make the connection of lessons from the past, their implications for the future, and to be able to communicate it effectively.

Scott Wozniak says

If you're looking for leadership theories, frameworks, or even best practices this book will disappoint. But if

you want a comparative biography of the most influential leaders of the 20th century, you'll like this book.

From Ghandi to Eleanor Roosevelt to Oppenheimer their lives are summed up, analyzed, and compared.

Warning: It's written very academically. The author is a Harvard Professor and it feels like a term paper. Phrases like "one would think" (avoiding using "I") and a lot of redundant thesis statements clutter up an otherwise good way to get a lot of biographies in one book.

Joanna says

Gardner lays out the characteristics of leadership in some surprising ways. Notes that high levels of verbal intelligence, distance from father figure, and exposure to travel are commonalities. Uses unlikely and new studies (people) as examples. Fascinating. What makes a leader? Read on...

Jeff says

I read Parts I and III of this text for a Leadership in Context course. Gardner's notion that leaders remember they are dealing with the eight-year-old mind is spot-on. Gardner has a tendency to drill the point home throughout the text, but that should not take away from the poignancy of the initial idea.

The chapters on Ghandi and Monet were interesting overviews of the men as leaders. In my case, having known nothing of Monet and shamefully little on Ghandi, these chapters were enriching reads.

Jaime says

This is a cool book. i'm reading it for class, but it's basically a quick run-down of some very impressive leaders in our history. It examines the different leadership styles and what events/traits lead a person to become extraordinary. Very interesting.

Devin Partlow says

This is a case study of a number of very famous leaders followed by the author drawing conclusions from the similarities and differences of these famous leaders.

I will say that he did a good job of picking leaders from all walks of life but I fear that readers could take his conclusions as "How to be a Leader" rather than "Here are Some Traits I Found in My Survey of Leaders".

Since I feel like the author wasn't explicit enough in stating that what his conclusions were the latter, he's penalized .5 stars!! lol

3.5 stars (definitely worth the read tho)

Anthony says

I knocked this book down to three stars because it is hard to read at times. It's clearly from the mind of an academic; that is the only real gripe I have with it. It is not a how-to manual and it never pretends to be (it's perhaps one of the main points that such a prescriptive approach isn't possible).

There are several good reasons for reading this book if you can get past how dry it is:

- The beginning chapters lay out the foundation of human development and the sophistication of the mind as one learns. These chapters alone are enlightening for one who has never studied such topics.
- The biographies are short yet complete. The authors cover how each person became a leader and how they fit into the mold that is presented throughout the book.
- Each biography covers the downfalls and failures of the leader. This is a common miss in many books that cover such "larger than life" personalities. There are several references to the inevitability of failure, and how one responds to this partially determines their ability to lead.
- The authors admit that their perspective is not the only valid one and not without its criticisms. Most people who look at academics as overly egotistical and stubborn should take special note of this.

It wouldn't be my first recommendation on leadership books, but certainly worth the read.

Lawrence Linnen says

Gardner defines a leader as an individual who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals. He selected the leaders purposefully to reinforce his arguments on leadership and to obtain a better understanding of effective leadership. Gardner presents case studies of Margaret Mead, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Alfred P. Sloan, George C. Marshall, Pope John XXIII, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Margaret Thatcher.

Keith says

I've read other Gardner books. He is an excellent writer and researcher. While the theme here is interesting and the biographies of each of the leaders he chooses to study are ok, the book is not compelling. His others were much better and more thought provoking.

Joshua Bowen says

Awesome analysis of the 11 leaders, but very academic book...often dry and hard to push through.

Mike says

Reading this book for a graduate class, I was not expecting much. I was pleasantly surprised that I enjoyed most parts of this book. Basically Gardner takes a look at great leaders in the 20th century and tries to come up with a common theme of what leadership looks like and where it comes from. I particularly enjoyed the middle section of the book that looked at specific characters that I did not know a great deal about (like Margaret Mead). Recommended as a character study of great figures and as a journey through some parts of 20th century history that you may not usually read about.

Emma Laskin says

Great Book since I helped write it!!
