



Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously in Charge

Henry Cloud

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In *Boundaries for Leaders*, clinical psychologist and bestselling author Dr. Henry Cloud leverages his expertise of human behavior, neuroscience, and business leadership to explain how the best leaders set boundaries within their organizations--with their teams and with themselves--to improve performance and increase employee and customer satisfaction.

In a voice that is motivating and inspiring, Dr. Cloud offers practical advice on how to manage teams, coach direct reports, and instill an organization with strong values and culture.

Boundaries for Leaders: Take Charge of Your Business, Your Team, and Your Life is essential reading for executives and aspiring leaders who want to create successful companies with satisfied employees and customers, while becoming more resilient leaders themselves.

Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously in Charge **Details**

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Troy says

The last chapter is the golden nugget!

I enjoyed most of the book, but the last chapter was worth the entire book. It is where the gold was. I learned more in that chapter than the rest of the book combined.

Personally, I think Dr. Cloud should have focused on that area more than any other.

The book is chalk full of illustrations and stories to fill in the gap between practical real life and theory.

Thank you Sir!

April Sarah says

There are some great points in this book, but nothing was truly life (and habit) changing for me. It may be because I have found myself some wonderful leaders to mentor me. However if you are just starting a leadership journey this would be a great book to look into.

Trent Ross says

This was a real struggle to finish. The ideas and leadership philosophies presented were mostly straightforward and agreeable, but never really broken into the enlightening. Additionally, the concepts frequently felt shoehorned into poor analogies to fit his theme.

Dr. Cloud provides plenty of personal examples that gave off serious self-aggrandizing vibes but little evidence to support his claims that this is all science. While I do actually believe the brain science he starts with, I do wonder if his application of that science isn't used a little too liberally to make his argument. Fun note: we do get to learn that one of Dr. Cloud's favorite studies involved putting a monkey in a cage and exposing it to "high level of psychological stress.... they pretty much scared him to death."

What really made this book difficult for me, other than depressing reveling in poor treatment of animals, was the writing. I generally was not a fan of Dr. Cloud's style of writing as I thought much of the phrasing was just odd.

More specifically, there were a few quirks in his writing that were very distracting. One was his penchant for unnecessary quotes. For example: *My way of thinking about "character" is that it involves a person's "whole" makeup, not just "moral." The real meaning of "integrity" is about being a "whole" or "integrated" leader. Why??* Every page is "littered" with "quotes" for no discernable "reason."

In other words, (that and, said another way, also make frequent appearances) I do not recommend.

Donny Teeter says

Very useful information for setting work boundaries in general.

Lora says

Boundaries For Leaders really caught my eye because ...well, it's by Dr. Henry Cloud and he writes great books! And this new one from him does not disappoint.

It's not exactly what I thought it might be about. I sort of picked it up hoping it was about leaders setting boundaries for their own time, etc., and, boy, was I going to read it aloud to my leader-husband. LOL

In reality, it's about how leaders can (and should) create boundaries for those they are leading--boundaries that they are able to succeed within. Each chapter is just full of nuggets of truth and wisdom.

One quote that has really stayed with me from this books is

"You cannot grow a plant by dipping
it into the dirt once a year.
It takes an ongoing connection
to build a root system."

Wow. That can be applied to so many areas of life. Just real wisdom there.

In conclusion, this book focuses on these key points:

- ~help people do what is important
- ~create the right environment
- ~have deeply connected teams
- ~think optimistically, not negatively
- ~learn what you can control and what you can't
- ~strive for high performance
- ~lead yourself

If you are in leadership on any level--and most people are--then I definitely recommend this book. It's a very insightful read and, of course, Dr. Cloud is an excellent writer so you won't be bored in the least.

Jannah Margaret says

Dr. Cloud can sound a bit antiquated at times with pointing out that it's necessary to not be overly harsh or direct constantly - but he does have a lot of meaningful insights and reminders. He has a great way of simplifying things to keep in mind and breaking down complex problems in a approachable way.

Anthony Brown says

I enjoyed the content, but I found Cloud's original Boundaries book to be much more insightful. While this book has a business focus, I felt it was not as helpful to me as the original book. I suppose I am also starting to limit my reading of "leadership" books. The reason being is that once you've grasped the basic principles of leadership (from the Bible and Ancient Greece onward) you're pretty much going to read/hear the same things packaged in different ways. I'm sure this book will speak to many. It was slightly disappointing to me.

Shaun says

This was a pretty good leadership book. It taught me how to create a work culture where people love to work. Below are the main points I learned:

1. Help people attend to what is important, inhibit what is not important or toxic, and remember what they are doing.
 2. Create an emotional environment that is free of the wrong kinds of stress.
 3. Build teams that are deeply connected.
 4. Help people to think optimistically and root out pessimism.
 5. Help people get in control of what they can control.
 6. Build great teams that are high performance.
 7. Lead yourself in ways that create great performance in others.
-

??c C??ng says

Not too amazing for a sixteen-years-old me, but I'm sure this book will be my choice in the future as I will have more experience in leader.

Barry says

The concepts are pretty simple and not earth shattering. Pay attention to the people around you and treat them well. Not rocket science.

Brian Pate says

This book did not grip me. I really enjoy hearing Cloud speak, but this book was bland. Decent leadership lessons, but nothing earth-shattering.

Annie says

The book covers basic concepts for leading a team or company. It's not particularly interesting nor does it get to the point. I didn't even know why it was titled "Boundaries for Leaders" until a few chapters in. It's about setting boundaries for the teams. The main point is the culture within the team exists through what the leader had created or allowed. If there is a team member who is pessimistic and is bringing everyone else down, the leader is allowing that behavior to become prevalent. The leader needs to meet with the team regularly, focus on factors that are controllable, encourage the desired behaviors, have team members share success stories arose from the desired behaviors, and build a culture of trust and optimism.

Tony says

This book helps you to understand the importance of how boundaries can help a leader and an organization to be better. It is full of insight into the nature of leadership and how it is easy to get distracted by outside influences that can pull you away from your goals and the actual vision of an organization.

Catherine Nelson says

Not at all what I was expecting, but absolutely golden. This one is a must for anyone who wants to lead a team well. Useful, practical information and insights.

The thing I really appreciated about this book was that so much of what Dr. Cloud was saying aligned with so much of what other great business leaders/writers say. He just came at it from a little different direction, with more psychology and human behavior (of course, he is a psychologist), which made it feel like coming full circle on so many of these leadership principles and problems. But the fact that they're all basically saying the same thing or they've all identified the same traits, the same behaviors tells me they've found some universal truths, and the sooner I learn and begin to apply those truths, the better off my results will be.

Also, I'm always wary when the author narrators his own book, but Dr. Cloud did a wonderful job, and this one was pleasant to listen to.

Shaun Lee says

After having read so so many books, am so glad that Cloud delivers one that I like so so very much! He draws from a lifetime of psychological study and experience in consulting with CEOs in writing this book. Real life stories are used to great effect to illustrate complicated or abstract principles. Sometimes he gets lost in retelling the stories that he forgets to reinforce the point (and we have to refer to the subtitle to figure out what he is trying to say).

Nevertheless, I highly recommend this book! Alongside Hybel's Courageous Leadership and McIntosh &

Rima's *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, this book would feature in my must-give book list to any leader I care about. I first read a copy borrowed from the school library, and I liked it so much that I bought one for myself.

Here's a quick summary of the gems in the book (spoiler warning!):

Leaders can motivate or demotivate their people (xiv) and one of the aspects of a leader's behaviour that make everything work is his/her "boundaries," which is a structure that determines what will exist and what will not (xv).

A leader is always going to get a combination of two things; what you create and what you allow (p15).

In the language of Apple, 'who is the DRI, the directly responsible individual? (who is over and allows the 'problem' employee to be difficult or not perform; if that employee is confused about the strategy or direction, who is it that sets them; p15).

The central principle of boundaries is ownership. Leaders are the one who define and create the boundaries that drive the behaviour that forms the identity of teams and culture and sets the standards of performance (p16).

Highlighted how returning Apple CEO Steve Jobs diagnosed the problem as a lack of focus and pruned 70% of models and products with a much-needed clarity through setting a positive boundary. The employees were to just make four great products: "consumer," "pro", "desktop" and "portable" (p19).

People don't leave jobs - they leave bosses (p56).

The importance that there is no relational consequences to making a mistake. That is what people need from their leaders, the knowledge that their leader is for their success, and if a mistake is made, that leader will stand beside them and help them learn and improve, not punish them... a "getting better" orientation goes much further than a "being perfect" orientation (p71).

Our brains need positive relationships to grow and function well (p83).

Most leaders are "meeting'ed to death" ... most of these meetings are not doing much to build connection and unity. The answer is usually not more but different meetings of a certain type and more connection as a result of whatever meeting do occur (p86).

In chapter 6 (p103-108), through a real life scenario, Cloud highlights the far reaching effects a leader with negative thinking can have on an entire organisation. This is in contrast to another company's founder who started it with an ingenious plan while still in bankruptcy (p103); this guy does not suffer from such negative thinking.

In contrast to learned helplessness (p108-116), a leader can focus his team's energy on working on controllable factors that directly affects the desired outcomes of the organisation (p126).

In chapter 8 (p153-166), Cloud illustrates the term "dead fish" with a real life scenario, which means something like the elephant in the room that needs to be addressed, in order for the team to accomplish a specific vision and mission.

The job of the leader is to form a team around a common purpose or goal, and then work with the team to figure out what that team is going to have to value and behave like to reach that goal (p165-6). It does not belong to a person, but to the person as a whole. As a result, it is going to take the entire team to make it happen. That is the essence of a team (p170).

The entertaining accounts of how people wanted feedback given to them demonstrated how important it was to get to know each individual's communication style and vulnerabilities. The needed feedback and difficult-to-hear truths prevented future hiccups, as they knew better how to deal with each other (p175).

We make investments when we feel trust, (p186-7) which grows when:

- we feel understood (p173-180)
- we display credibility and character (p180-3)
- we believe in someone's capacity and ability (p183-4)
- someone has a built a good track record (p184-6)

While internal advisers are essential, outside ones are different. They protect you by having no conflict of interest; they are only there to help you, not to serve themselves, if they are good ones (p203).

Set very, very strong boundaries with yourself against any tendency you might have toward defensiveness, blame, or denial when given feedback. The weakest leaders are threatened by feedback, and often completely closed off to insights that are so easily seen by others. Strong leaders embrace feedback, seek to understand it, and put it to use. Even when they may disagree, they don't become defensive; instead they engage in dialogue and honest inquiry to figure out where the gaps between their intentions and others' perceptions come from. The feedback may be wrong, but they embrace it to understand it nevertheless. You can embrace and not agree at the same time. Move toward it (p208-9).

Don't be ruled by fear (p212-3) or put off change (p214-6): take steps toward overcoming the fear rather put off something indefinitely.

Set boundaries on your weaknesses (p219-221) and confine yourself to do what you are gifted at, don't meddle in affairs that would result in operational chaos.

It is of utmost importance to do a time audit to identify gaps between stated priorities and time/effort spent. What is vital to achieve your vision? Are those getting on the schedule first? Give them first priority but assign them a time and place, so that they actually get done (p221-6).

There is only so much time available and if one says yes to something, that means no to something else. (p224)

Give yourself time to refuel after an energy sapping activity, eg. high-conflict situations (p225) or draining people (p226).

When you realise that you are ridiculously in charge, it does not mean you are in charge of others or in charge of what goes on in the organization. It also means that you are ridiculously in charge of yourself (p230-1).

There are two kinds of high level leaders. One is defined by the work. The other is in a process of actively defining the work, and they do that by first defining themselves and taking charge of who they are going to be and how they are going to work. They have good self-leadership boundaries (p231).

Far too many leaders fail because they think plenty about the plan and not enough about the people (p234). Do all of these things, and you will have science on your side. More important, you will have the people on your side, people who want to work for and with a leader who engenders an environment that attends to our strongest human desires: to connect, create and grow (p236).
