



BOOK REVIEW: G. DONALD CHANDLER AND JOHN W. CHANDLER'S (2013) *ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: ACROSS DOMAINS, CULTURES, AND ERAS*

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Leadership is not about taking charge of people. G. Donald Chandler and John W. Chandler (2013) address the questions of why some leaders are effective, ineffective, and only a few that are exceptional.

They present a pragmatic argument for defining leadership, case studies of exemplary leaders, leadership skills, and ethical choices. This book is a beneficial resource for expanding knowledge and professional development for individuals that aspire to become leaders.

In various aspects of individual lives, there is always a need or opportunity for leadership. From small groups to nations, leaders are influencing, whether directly or indirectly. This book, written by G. Donald Chandler and John W. Chandler, addresses the questions of why some leaders are effective, ineffective, and only a few that are exceptional. The ideas presented in this text help readers define leadership and make the realization that everybody possesses leadership experiences and skills. Chandler and Chandler offer a leadership framework that gives the basis of effective leadership across domains, cultures, and eras.

Content and Highlights

On Effective Leadership: Across Domains, Cultures, and Eras is organized into four parts and ten chapters with a forward, introduction, and epilogue. Eight case studies of leadership roles are discussed. Part one (chapters 1 and 2) lays the foundation of effective leadership and describes, in-depth, the conceptual framework for effective leadership. In chapter one, the authors define leadership and distinguishes between effective leadership and exceptional leadership. Leadership, according to Chandler and Chandler, must encompass skills of persuasion and the ability to set goals. Effective leadership is presented as “moral, immoral, or morally neutral and successfully achieves the mutual purpose shared by the leader and the followers” (p. 6). On the other hand, exceptional leadership “cannot be immoral and is the combination of the leader’s effectiveness and the worthiness of the goal achieved” (p. 6). The authors, in chapter two, highlight the framework of three key principles of effectual leadership that can be applied across domains, cultures, and eras. Chandler and Chandler view leadership as three variables: “(1) developing a compelling, well-conceived vision for the achievement of a set of goals that are shared by a group of followers, (2) persuasively communicating that vision in a manner that is appropriate to the group, (3) building and managing an organization that effectively supports the implementation of the vision” (p. 9). These three variables are laid on the foundational variable of selflessness, which is the most valuable quality of an exceptional leader. Each of these variables is presented in the image of a Greek temple. According to the authors, the variables can be developed and must be modified according to the leadership challenge presented. Not following this specific framework can contribute to a leader’s success or failure. In each set, two leaders are examined: one is less effective and the other is the more effective leader. Through these case studies a leader’s selflessness is observed, along with one of the three framework’s columns of effective leadership (John Gardner, William Harper, & George Fox).

Part two, “Organizing Change” (chapters 3 to 5), examines three sets of leaders that were able to build and manage an organization that displayed their individual effectiveness. The three sets of leaders are organized as follows: social activists Margaret Sanger and Susan B. Anthony versus Elizabeth Cady Stanton, political leaders Robert McNamara versus John Gardner, and entrepreneurs Henry Ford versus Soichiro Honda. Sanger, Anthony, and Stanton, are presented as unforgettable social activists in the movement for women’s rights. Each individual, though leadership style varies, was passionate concerning their cause but Sanger was the least effective leader in that she was an inefficient manager and allowed herself to get in the way of the development of her organizations. McNamara and Gardner were both a part of Lyndon B. Johnson’s cabinet. Gardner was presented as the more effective leader for his leadership and management. He was able to communicate his vision and carry it out. Unlike Gardner, McNamara lacked the communication skills and the selflessness needed to be an exceptional leader. Ford and Honda, who both created major car companies, were the last two individuals to be compared in section two of the book. Even though they both built successful organizations, Ford was believed to be self-centered and insecure while Honda was considered to be generous, beneficent, and secure.

Part three, “Powers of Persuasion” (chapters 6 to 8), compares three sets of leaders that the authors believed had a unique ability to persuade. The three groups of leaders spotlighted are G. Stanley Hall and William Rainey Harper (university presidents), Edward Teller and Sir William Osler (scientific leaders), and Napoleon and Augustus (empire builders). In each of these individual cases, the communication skills of these influential people were highlighted.

These leaders possessed the ability to persuasively communicate their vision. Persuasive communication can either inspire or misdirect followers. Effective leaders must embody their vision and have the ability to persuade through various communicative methods.

Part four, “Transforming Visions” (chapters 9 through 10), explores the leadership techniques of two sets of leaders: John Humphrey Noyes and George Fox (religious visionaries) and Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela (revolutionary leaders). These leaders had revolutionizing visions that succeeded based upon the level of selflessness or selfishness. The difference between the leadership style of Fox and Noyes was the selflessness. Such as in the case of Fox and Noyes, Mugabe and Mandela’s selflessness was the difference in their leadership. Both of these individuals communicated their vision and created organizations that supported the vision, and both were elected to the head of their country; however the degree of selflessness was the difference maker in both of these individuals.

In the epilogue, the authors propose four additional findings that are supported from the case studies and their personal experiences. They are key principals of effective leadership, ramifications for followers when choosing a leader, relevant questions to ask leaders, and essential components for developing leaders. Concerning implications for developing leaders, leadership can contain elements of art and science. For example, the variable of vision contains elements of science while the variable of organizational capability contains elements of both science and art. The authors also believe that anyone can become a leader as long as they possess appropriate social and intellectual skills. The authors also divulge the implications of followers when choosing a leader. Followers play a role in deciding to support a leader’s vision and whether or not to pursue the goal of the vision. These followers can also ask critical questions that will help them adequately choose a leader. The areas of concern for these questions are as follows: visionary abilities, communication skills, organization capabilities, degree of selflessness, and the strength of his will.

Observations

On Effective Leadership: Across Domains, Cultures, and Eras would be a beneficial resource for expanding knowledge and professional development for individuals that aspire to become leaders. In addition to leadership and the principles that one must follow in order to be not only an effective leader but an exceptional one, four key principles (e.g. compelling and well-conceived vision, persuasive communication, capable supporting organization, and selflessness) are explained in this book to help identify the qualities of effective leaders. In some cases, each individual may possess a weakness in one of the four areas but their strength in another area allowed them to still be effective. Characteristics, education, and personality traits also play somewhat of a role when determining the effectiveness of a leader. Because these characteristics vary, it is difficult to identify which ones are correlated with effective leaders. These four principles can provide a guide to reach success in an effort to become an exceptional leader. Similarly, leadership cases from different domains (e.g. Augustus and Napoleon), cultures (e.g. Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela), and eras (e.g. Margaret Sanger and Susan B. Anthony/ Elizabeth Cady Stanton) are insightful resources for readers interested in leadership studies.

This book is beneficial for anyone leading a group of people, large or small, such as educators, administrators, government officials, and chief executive officers. Through the analysis of these leadership profiles, unique experiences and qualities are presented that can

affect one's stance on effective leadership and how to develop the characteristics of an effective leader. The audience of this book covers a wide range of individuals from leaders of small organizations to leaders of major corporations. The book is valuable to any individual that has a leadership role, whether in the classroom, government departments, or frontrunners of a particular movement.

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