

BOOK REVIEW

Lanik, M. (2018). The Leader Habit: Master the Skills You Need to Lead – in Just Minutes a Day. New York, NY: AMACOM. 238 p.

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The times we are living in are becoming very complicated. People are expected to know as many things from as diverse fields as possible. But even so, how can we use all this knowledge and is it relevant? What can we do with all the information we gather and try to memorize? These are day-to-day issues everyone deals with, no matter the field or the studied subject. These are some questions the author asks himself, and the answers are comprised in this book.

Leadership has been in the eye of the researchers for a substantial number of years, and many practitioners that have the responsibility to guide a group of people have probably read books and went to workshops and different training programs, but how much did that help them?

This book has many practical applications, but it is mainly addressed to leaders that are uncertain about the aspects that don't seem to have the expected effect and how to find the issue in this situation, for leaders that want a simple and accessible way to know themselves better and then to improve certain facets that seem to be the problem, for the leaders that studied their area, but are unsure how to use all the information they gained. It can be categorized in the self-development department, but also in the field of psychology of leadership, even though it includes different aspects of various subjects of psychology.

The author, who has a career built in the leadership development domain, promises a

simple solution for acquiring new leadership skills in just five minutes. The central idea is that people can develop different skills by overlearning simple behaviors to the point of becoming habits. Because of their nature, practices need very little mental energy to occur, a process that the author names "automaticity" and it's similar to autopilot mode.

The book is short and written in a friendly manner so that the readers, no matter the experience they have, can understand the main idea and how to apply it in a style that suits them best. It is divided into six parts and then is smaller chapters. The chapters also have a few subtitles that are only two to three pages long, so the reader doesn't feel forced to go through a significant chapter.

The first two chapters are comprised in the first part of the book called "How it works". It addresses the main ideas that stand behind the "leader habit formula". It breaks down the main components, it gives a clear definition, and it doesn't expect the reader to know certain aspects of psychology or neuroscience already. This first chapter encompasses information taken from different reliable, scientific sources that the reader can later check if they are interested in the processes that are behind habits. The next chapter elaborates the characteristics of specific behaviors that have the potential to become a habit. The author includes a description of the study that is behind the book and the

procedures he and his team went through when they categorized the primary twenty-two leadership skills with their corresponding seventy-nine micro-behaviors.

Part two called "Build your leadership skills" has three chapters, and the central idea is the way the personality of the leader can influence the way they acquire specific skills. The author is helping the reader to know himself better and then to find the particular micro-behaviors, as he calls them, that they can practice more efficiently so that eventually they will occur naturally. The book has a brief questionnaire that can guide the reader, but the author provides a link for a free, extended version of the said questionnaire. It continues with a thorough description of the six main personality dimensions of the theory that have the corresponding labels: curious, organized, caring, outgoing, ambitious and resilient.

Part three elaborates on all the seventy-nine micro behaviors the author mentioned in the previous chapters. He divides them by the corresponding primary leadership skills and then indicates why are those specific skills critical, what they add to a leader's experience, how can one figure out they need to improve that particular skill and which personality trait has a natural tendency to do the said behavior. As expected, this is the longest part of the

book. The author didn't take any shortcuts and gave the reader a reliable scaffolding for picking and practicing the micro-behaviors they consider best for them.

The last part of the book entitled "Encourage skills in others" addresses the motivations that stay behind our behaviors and how we can foster them in others, what ways we can use to persuade people to change, how to challenge them to see that certain things they do aren't reasonable. The chapters go into inevitable mistakes one does when telling others, they need to change or improve what they do and how they do specific tasks. It touches the subjects of empathy, patience, and contemplation and in the end, it encourages the reader to persevere in his journey of becoming a better leader.

To conclude, I consider this book a valuable source of information for the general public, that has a scientific background and structure behind it, an aspect that will please the more skillful reader that knows different fields of psychology. Even though the book is intended for those that want to improve their leadership skills, the information presented is simple enough so that the reader can apply it in different aspects of his day-to-day life, no matter the circumstances.