



Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World

Chris Lowney

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Leadership Principles for Lasting Success

Leadership makes great companies, but few of us truly understand how to turn ourselves and others into great leaders. One company—the Jesuits—pioneered a unique formula for molding leaders and in the process built one of history’s most successful companies.

In this groundbreaking book, Chris Lowney reveals the leadership principles that have guided the Jesuits for more than 450 years: self-awareness, ingenuity, love, and heroism. Lowney shows how these same principles can make each of us a dynamic leader in the twenty-first century.

“Entertaining and well researched, this is a must-read for any business leader, and an inspirational read for anyone who wants to be a better human being.”

—Walter Gubert, chairman of the investment bank, J. P. Morgan

“Lowney does a wonderfully engaging job of making clear the connections between our current leadership challenges and the principles employed so effectively by the Jesuits.”

—Edward J. Kelly III, president and ceo, Mercantile Bankshares Corporation

“In this absorbing, lucid book, Lowney . . . explores how the Jesuits have successfully grappled with challenges that test great companies. Reflective businesspeople of faith will find Lowney’s insights a breath of fresh air.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“This 450-year-old institution [seems] as current today as it was four centuries ago. Lowney shows us how every employee can and should be a leader and that love-driven leadership does work.”

—Richard K. Green, former president and COO, Blistex, Inc.

“This informative, fascinating book tells how Jesuits produced both outstanding individual leaders and a culture of leadership. This is a book to be enjoyed, pondered, and put into practice.”

—John W. Padberg, S.J., director, Institute of Jesuit Sources

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Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World Details

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From Reader Review Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World for online ebook

Julie Nanavati says

This book explores what we can learn from the Jesuits when building leadership skills. Author, Chris Lowney, focusses on four Jesuit principles that may seem counterintuitive to more contemporary leadership approaches, and skillfully demonstrates how these four can be used to develop as a strong leader in our modern day. They are:

1. Self-awareness: understanding their strengths, weaknesses, values, and world view
2. Ingenuity: confidently innovating and adapting to embrace a changing world
3. Love: engaging others with a positive, loving attitude
4. Heroism: energizing themselves and others through heroic ambitions

Memorable quotes from the book include, "Though executives frequently rise through the ranks on the strength of their technical expertise, raw intelligence, and/or sheer ambition, these traits alone rarely translate into successful longterm leadership performance. Research increasingly suggests that IQ and technical skills are far less crucial to leadership success than is mature self-awareness. In other words, the hard evidence points to the critical soft skills that are encompassed by knowing oneself (p. 29)."

and

"Individuals perform best when they are respected, valued, and trusted by someone who genuinely cares for their well-being. Loyola was unafraid to this bundle of winning attitudes, love" and to tap its energizing, unifying power for his Jesuit team. Effective leaders tap its power today as well (p. 33)."

Noreen says

Could have had a better title. A simplified history of the Jesuits successes and failures. Questions for further research.

Was Francis Borgia, a Spanish pope or a cardinal? Where was he in the line of Borgia Popes?

What are typical morning examen questions? What are typical evening examen questions?

What is a morning Jesuit prayer? What is an evening Jesuit prayer?

Might the history of the South American Guarani be the model "Paradise" in Barry Unsworth's "Sacred Hunger". A place where black and white lived together harmoniously until slave traders caught them.

Pg 194. Will have to ask Keith about the Trinidad reduction where the Jesuits built cut stone houses with tile roofs. Later buildings were of clay and straw.

There was no value added role for women.

Early Jesuits were linguistic masters. The phonetic writing for Vietnamese invented by Jesuits is one example. Early Jesuits were more impressed by Chinese than Japanese.

Role of Jesuits, in development of early astronomy and Galileo is interesting.

Best to fly under the radar if you challenge status quo.

Joey Silayan says

I love this book. It revitalized everything that was ATENEO in me, specifically the Jesuit foundations I had from ADMU. It also gave a much deeper appreciation of the Jesuits of who have modeled me into the person I am today.

I likewise applied many of the principles and the Four Pillars of Self-Awareness, Ingenuity, Love and Heroism in my company. The Team did very, very well. I now have to modify these applications in my company, but the Four Pillars will still stand (albeit modified), because they are timeless.

Highly recommended book!

Łukasz Biedrycki says

In fact, one of the best books about jesuits spirituality.

Dan Ferguson says

Best leadership book I've ever read!

Kris says

Recommended on son rise morning show. Includes many interesting insights on leadership from the perspective of a former Jesuit novice who now works in the corporate world. Really a great read for anyone. The principles addressed in this book could be applied to everyday life. Thanks to Fr. James Martin, I'm a bit familiar with the Jesuits, but this author introduced me to some new-to-me Jesuit history. Amazing stories of tremendous faith, really great examples of the principles he's describing. And the author does a terrific job of making these historical figures and their problems relevant to modern readers. I learned a ton about myself, I've been inspired to research the Spiritual Exercises, and I have more confidence in my leadership abilities, really glad I heard about this one. Will definitely recommend to friends.

Gisela Morales says

Un Estilo de Gerencia aplicable en todos los roles que a diario desempeñamos. Por fiin lo termine.

Pawel Chudzinski says

Very good read! Interesting lead concept(s) around leadership coming from how one is conducting oneself. The examples illustrating the points are helpful, but somewhat lengthy, especially towards the end of the book. The summary / conclusion in the end is a nice wrap up and repetition of main ideas of the book.

Paul says

The first few chapters, and the last two chapters were phenomenal, and a great relationship between the key tenets of Ignatian Spirituality with 'regular' leadership. The chapters on the individual Saints were interesting but a little dragged out.

Overall, a great read for people searching for tangible leadership training grounded in care for humans that also includes 'results', as opposed to simply caring about results.

Cow says

This is a very powerful look at the early history of the Jesuit order, and how their unique devotion to self-awareness, ingenuity, and love combined to make them natural leaders--from the top of the order down. It's written by a man who spent six years in Jesuit formation before leaving to become an investment banker at J. P. Morgan; he sees the good and the bad in this, and his analysis is fascinating.

The good: I found more than a few very piercing, deep insights in this book. I found myself quoting bits at people, even in discussions with Jesuit priests; and every one of them I've talked to is very familiar with the book.

It's aimed at an audience that isn't necessarily interested in the Jesuits, or the Church, or anything like that. It's simply meaning to pull the lessons of the great leaders of the Jesuits and apply them to the modern corporate world. But you can't talk about them without talking about the amazing stories and lives that so many of them led, from the only Westerner to be made a first-rank mandarin in Ming Dynasty China, to a group who tried to free the indigenous slaves in colonial Paraguay (and the mess they made as a result).

The bad: Wow does it get repetitive. Especially the bits at the end of each chapter; you can almost sense the PowerPoint slides being made to give the lecture, attempting to hammer the point home again and again. About a third of this book can be skipped, assuming you paid attention the first time you read it. This might have annoyed me more than it should.

Finally, one question that never gets answered--and maybe isn't the point, but which I'd really like to know in order to apply to the rest of the text--is why Mr Lowney left. What biases and animosities does he hold? What colours his point of view--good or bad--from his time there?

In the end, this is another of those books where, if the summary sounds interesting, I think you should read it. It's written well enough (although feel free to skim any time the repetition kicks in) and it is full of great stories and insights.

Laura says

I don't think I ever would have read this if not for the extraordinarily enthusiastic reviews from a couple of people I really respect. At first glance, the book appears to be largely about two things that are not, and have never really been, part of my experience: the Jesuits and leadership in the private sector. But before I'd gotten too far into the book, I discovered that the Jesuits are fascinating and, although the principles that Lowney endorses may well be as helpful in the business world as he and his own experience suggest, they certainly look useful to me.

On the first point, the Jesuits have some amazing stories. He could have taken the stories and put them in a separate book, with no overarching message, and it would have been a great book.

On the second, Lowney makes a strong case for the four undergirding principles of Jesuit belief and practice and why adherence to them made the Jesuits so fabulously successful. (He points out helpfully why some of the Jesuits' biggest failures resulted from straying from those principles.) He argues persuasively for the importance of...

- self-awareness (particularly in identifying one's values and weaknesses and taking the time - three times a day, if possible - to reflect on how one's behavior that day has conformed to one's values and has, or has not, dealt with one's weaknesses)
- innovativeness (particularly in cultivating a sort of "indifference" or detachment from one's current state that will allow one to adapt to change)
- love (seeing the potential in others and working to help them realize it in an atmosphere of trust and affection)
- heroism (having big, big goals and the audacity to pursue them with perseverance)

I'm convinced enough to try to put them in action.

Lori says

Once you get past the first few chapters, this book spends a lot of time on Jesuit history to illustrate the points and build understanding into the how behind Heroic Leadership. If you find the historical components interesting, as I do having worked at Jesuit colleges for going on 5 years, the book proves to be intriguing, albeit a bit dense. If not, there are many parts that could be skipped over to try and absorb many of the great "ah-ha" moments and paragraphs that hold key insights to Lowney's leadership theory.

Overall, worth the read but be prepared to motivate yourself to get through it.

Alex Ryan says

Great review of how Jesuit history remains the paragon for leadership in education, business, and religious orders. Would throw some cool stories or quotes offered by the book here, but if I am ever really interested in remembering the book I should probably reread it since its a 2-day read.

Angelo Parcesepe says

Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World de Chris Lowney.

Leí este libro porque quiero expandir mis gustos literarios.

Ja. Mejor dicho, lectura obligatoria para la universidad, me obligue a leerlo, y señor Lowney escribir esporádicamente la palabra "liderazgo" no lo hace de ninguna forma un libro sobre el tema en cuestión, sin embargo "A+" por repetir lo mismo una y otra vez de diferentes maneras.

Robert Bogue says

Sometimes you stumble over a book in a way that makes you believe that there's some outside force – God or the higher power or whatever – and you decide you need to read it. *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World* is one of those for me. On my way out to SPTEchCon last week I sat next to a lady who I noticed had a leadership paper she was working on. She wasn't reading a book on leadership, she was editing a paper on leadership. I can't remember this every happening in all of my years of traveling. Through our conversations I learned that she was a minister's wife in Iowa attending a seminary in Chicago. When we discussed leadership she said that the book *Heroic Leadership* had really influenced her thoughts on leadership – particularly that she realized that everyone leads. A book that can create a feeling of leadership inside a person is a book worth reading – so I downloaded it and started reading.

[Click here to read the full review](#)
