

You Don't Need a Title to Be a Leader, by Mark Sanborn
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If you don't want to take much time and still want to expand some skills, I highly encourage reading the book You Don't Need a Title to Be a Leader by Mark Sanborn. The general concepts are clearly laid out with examples that illustrate the points being made. Instead of focusing solely on the identified leaders within an organization, this book focuses on, as stated by the author, "little l" leadership. The concepts in the book will pertain to your work, volunteer and personal life so is directly applicable to anyone in any role within a business or a family.

Throughout the book, you may need to give up your concept of what a leader is. As Sanborn writes, "In my opinion, fame is based on what we get in life, but true greatness is based on what we give in life." Very clearly the author is defining leadership as service, not fame. As a leader you may, and likely will get recognition, but it will be based on your influence in the world around you.

Sanborn presents six principles of leadership:

1. Power of Self-Mastery
In order to lead others, the author proposes you first need to lead yourself. By discovering what gives your life meaning, you start down the path of leading others.
2. Power of Focus
As you focus your life, you need to prioritize and live intentionally. The author makes a distinction between waiting and drifting. Waiting is intentional and serves a purpose while with drifting you are just following the tide in your life.
3. Power with People
As a leader, you accomplish things with people not through them. There is a team dynamic that needs to occur instead of a dictatorship.
4. The Power of Persuasive Communication
Sanborn states that the communication is not the objective, understanding is. The goal of communication needs to be gaining understanding.
5. The Power of Execution
In short, the author states you need to change your nouns into verbs. As an example, you need to take a vision into visioning. Visioning is active and causes influence; a vision is something you hang on wall.
6. The Power of Giving
The last principle he provides may also be the most powerful one. In Sanborn's words, "When you make the world better for others, you make the world better for yourself."

In addition to the concepts provided, Sanborn also provides leadership action points at the end of each section. These points will give you something concrete to work on as you finish each section. By taking these points seriously, I believe you will see a difference in how you approach leadership as well as how you view your influence in the world around you.

As I wrap up this review, I will do so in the same manner as the author. As a leader, what you most interested in is your legacy to the business or to your family. By becoming a more effective and influential leader, you will leave something behind that reflects your leadership. My parting comments are found in the last line of the book, “In my experience, the marks in life we leave – our legacies – are most often left not in stone and steel, in history and politics, or poetry and literature, but in the lives of other people.”