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## **BECOMING A RESONANT LEADER**

*Develop Your Emotional Intelligence,  
Renew Your Relationships,  
Sustain Your Effectiveness*

By Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis, and Frances Johnston

With daily talk of a possible recession and many predicting a greater economic slowdown in the months – and perhaps years – to come, today’s leaders are facing more pressure than ever before. In such a demanding environment, even the best and strongest leaders are being forced to both manage the strain of driving quarterly results or short term political gains *and* deal with tumultuous and unpredictable economic and political climates. Given the immense and growing expectations of leaders, they need help and direction to face the challenges ahead.

Solutions to this current leadership crisis arrive in a new book, **BECOMING A RESONANT LEADER: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence, Renew Your Relationships, Sustain Your Effectiveness**, by Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis, and Frances Johnston (Harvard Business School Press; March 6, 2008). McKee and Boyatzis also co-authored the groundbreaking bestselling books, *Primal Leadership* (written with

Daniel Goleman) and *Resonant Leadership*. McKee and Johnston work daily with CEOs, politicians and other senior leaders as consultants and executive coaches, witnessing first-hand the remarkable transformations of some of the greatest leaders of our time. Their new book offers a comprehensive roadmap for those who want to incorporate the authors' leadership principles into their day to day work.

### **The Road to Change**

Resonant leadership, say the authors, is when a leader's personal values and passions are present in every aspect of their lives—at work and at home. These leaders create enabling environments for, and skillfully manage the emotions of, the people they lead. Such leaders have come to understand what they value, what helps them find balance in their lives, and what renews and inspires them to live *and* to lead.

Using a well-researched, well-documented and practical approach, this book gives leaders the chance to articulate their hopes and dreams, to see themselves as they really are today and to craft a self-directed plan for intentional change.

“If we are to find our way to a better world,” write the authors, “we need to find people who can see beyond today, spark hope instead of despair, and draw others into an intentional journey of transformation.” Transformation is difficult but possible, they say. “People learn and develop when *what they want to change matters deeply and will affect them both personally and professionally*. It's not just about leadership development. In fact, professional growth without personal transformation is impossible. As we change, the world changes. As the world changes, we *must* change.”

The book provides an actual guidebook for change. It begins with the premise that great leadership is a combination of natural ability with learned behaviors. It encourages leaders to dig deep into their own goals and interests, and then define those things for both themselves and the companies they lead. Anyone who wants to become a resonant leader should ask themselves:

Why would anyone follow me?  
Am I inspirational? How do I inspire people?  
Am I leveraging my strengths as a leader? The strengths of those around me?  
Do I create an overall positive emotional tone that is characterized by hope?  
Am I in touch with others? Do I really know what is on others' hearts and minds? How do I show this?  
Do I regularly experience and demonstrate compassion? How?  
Am I authentic and in tune with myself, others, and the environment? How can people see this in me?

A careful look at the answers to these key questions will help leaders begin the journey that will help them develop emotional intelligence, build resonance, and renew themselves and their passion for their lives and their work.

From a basketball coach at Southern Methodist University to CEOs of global companies to one of the few women to hold a senior position in a global gas and oil company, the book offers real life case studies of leaders who have undergone real change. For some, it was nearly losing everything that turned the key to transformation; for others, it was facing head on what it meant to live by their values, even when it went against the current of their organizations. By staying connected to, or rediscovering, their passions, the leaders in this book found ways to reinvigorate themselves and their organizations—achieving exceptional results.

Cogent, inspirational, and full of practical advice, **BECOMING A RESONANT LEADER** is sure to become a crucial component of today's business bookshelf.

**BECOMING A RESONANT LEADER:  
Develop Your Emotional Intelligence,  
Renew Your Relationships,  
Sustain Your Effectiveness.**

Authors: Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis, Fran Johnston  
Harvard Business School Press  
Publication date: March 6, 2008  
ISBN: 978-1422117347  
Paperback; \$24.95  
224 pages

## About the Authors

### **Annie McKee**

Founder of Teleos Leadership Institute, consultant and executive coach, author and faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania, Annie McKee advises leaders of some of the largest corporations in the world. A scholar on the cutting edge of leadership, organizational culture and change, she is dedicated to making good leaders better and world-class corporations even more successful.

Named as the “High Priestess of Executive Coaching” by Business Week and one of their 100 Best Leaders of 2005, she works closely with senior management teams at international firms such as Starbucks Entertainment, Reuters, UniCredit Banca, Unilever, Schering-Plough, and Merrill Lynch. McKee also provides extensive pro bono consulting services to NGOs and non-profits around the world. McKee serves on the faculty of University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education and has also taught in the Wharton MBA Program. She received her Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Case Western University.

### **Richard Boyatzis**

Richard E. Boyatzis is Professor in the Departments of Organizational Behavior, Psychology, and Cognitive Science at Case Western Reserve University and in Human Resources at ESADE. Before becoming a professor, he was CEO of McBer and Company and COO of Yankelovich, Skelly & White. He is the author of more than 100 articles and numerous books, including the international bestseller, *Primal Leadership*, with Daniel Goleman and Annie McKee. Boyatzis has a BS in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT and a MS and Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Harvard University.

### **Frances Johnston**

Johnston is co-chairman of the Teleos Leadership Institute where, along with McKee, she consults and coaches some of the world's greatest business minds. Johnston has worked closely with a wide variety of leaders ranging from former Khmer Rouge Generals in Cambodia to CEOs of Fortune 100 companies. Johnston is the author or a number of chapters and articles on leadership, group dynamics and organizational culture transformation. She teaches at Wharton Business School’s Aresty Institute of Executive Education. Johnston holds an M.A. in Sports Psychology and a Ph.D. in Adult and Organizational Development from Temple University.

## **The Three Common Myths and Truths of Resonant Leadership**

Widely held beliefs about leadership drive people to adopt practices that ruin cultures and destroy motivation to the point that it is unlikely, even cognitively impossible, for them to sustain performance over time. As we look at each one, consider what impact these myths and truths about good leadership have on you.

### **Myth #1**

Being smart is good enough.

### **Truth #1**

Intellect and technical knowledge are the baseline. In other words, you have to be smart to get in the door. Research has proven that it is emotional and social intelligence – not IQ, a college degree, or technical experience – are the more important factors in distinguishing great leadership from average leadership.

### **Myth #2**

Your mood doesn't matter.

### **Truth #2**

Emotions are a natural and constant part of the human experience. And we are fooling ourselves if we think we can ignore them. They are everywhere, all the time, driving people to think and act. A leader ignores them at their own peril. Research suggests that the *leader's* mood matters most of all. Neuro psychology points to the fact that when people are fearful, anxious or angry, they shut down; likewise when people are generally optimistic, energized and excited, they think more clearly and creatively, have more resilience and simply perform better. In other words, when people are in a hopeful state, we are literally wired for success. People's emotions, and the resulting level of resonance, has a profound effect on individual and collective performance.

### **Myth #3**

Good leaders can take constant pressure.

### **Truth #3**

The heavy responsibilities and constant demands of leadership are limitless. This can result in the experience of a level of stress can render even the strongest leaders weak. If left unattended to, this relentless stress can cause leaders to fall into the *Sacrifice Syndrome* – a vicious cycle of stress and sacrifice, resulting in mental and physical distress, burnout, and diminished effectiveness. This spreads to team or eventhroughout the entire organizations. The best leaders find ways to cope by cultivating habits of the mind and behavior that counter these negative effects. Rather than just taking rest or holidays, they cultivate a mindfulness and behaviors that demonstrate hope and compassion. Together, these practices create resilience in the face of the constant pressures of the leadership role.

## Profiles of Resonant Leaders

### *Emotional Intelligence*

Research shows that it takes more than just a high IQ to lead. Rather, it is social and emotional intelligence which distinguishes great leaders from merely good ones.

#### **Dan Sontag, Senior Vice President, Merrill Lynch**

Wall Street attributes Sontag's success at the financial giant to strategy and execution, the clear “what” of leadership. But the “how” of Sontag’s strategy has been marked by creativity, courage, and passion. As Head of the Americas Client Relationship Group, [what’s his new title? Which should we use?] he has brought his leadership team to the point that they can and do leverage their strengths and build resonance even when dealing with the organizational challenges inherent in gaining victory in the market. Sontag has been a firm believer, since the beginning of his tenure, that culture change would make the difference in sustaining performance. He took the time to have every manager interviewed confidentially about how they viewed the culture and leadership at Merrill. He then used that blueprint to guide him as he engaged with the group, through good times and bad. His honesty and concern for their viewpoint tips the scale time and again in his team's performance.

### *Renew Relationships*

Some people don't wait around for life's wake up calls – the broken relationships, failures, and health problems. Some are awake, aware, and listening, and have become *mindful* of the world around them. This mindfulness creates resilience in the face of stress and creates leaders who learn from experiences faster than others around them.

#### **CJ Warner, Group Vice President, BP (British Petroleum)**

Warner is a chemical engineer, a “techie,” and one of the very few senior women in the oil and gas industry. She is also an excellent leader, masterful at building relationships among disparate groups and finding paths through difficult situations. She gets results and builds resonance. Managing her career in a male-dominated industry came with challenges and more jobs and assignments than her male counterparts were given. Rather than becoming frustrated, Warner chose to use these extra experiences to learn. She treats challenges as opportunities and uses them to make her team stronger and wiser. The experience taught Warner to build bridges between people and organizations where tough confrontation is the standard practice, as it can be between the oil industry and its various regulatory agencies. Her outlook helped her convince people on both sides of the fence that improving environmental performance overall was more important than arguing over small details. These standard practices have been adopted industry wide and Warner is considered a key leader in forming solutions.

## *Sustain Effectiveness*

Leaders are particularly prone to what can be defined as the *Sacrifice Syndrome*, a pattern of behaviors in which personal good is always and constantly put second to the daily demands and stresses that leadership imposes. The best leaders are able to step away from the stress, become mindful of their own state of mind and that of others, and cultivate habits and practices that allow them to renew themselves and continue to effectively lead.

### **Matt Doherty, SMU College Basketball Coach**

As one of University of North Carolina's youngest coaches, Matt Doherty was at the helm of a tremendously complicated program – logistically, emotionally and politically. This position was a dream job – one of the top college basketball teams in the world, a perennial champion with an extremely rich tradition. He was a veteran of the program, having played with Michael Jordan on the 1982 National Championship team. Matt was a great player and a great young coach.

He drove the players hard, and himself harder, relishing the pressure of being responsible for a team that many people felt personally passionate about. Failure was not an option. As the pressure mounted, so did Matt's drive and focus. Soon, the intensity Matt was famous for became a liability. Nobody was happy. And the team kept losing.

After the team didn't make the NCAA Tournament, Matt was forced to resign and his world came crumbling down. It was a difficult time, and a real wake up call. He turned his signature drive and intensity toward figuring out what had happened.

Now, Matt is coaching again at a prestigious school. He is living and coaching in a way that is consistent with his values. He has built a successful basketball program at Southern Methodist University based on his core values of respect, trust and commitment. He has become a resonant leader and his teams are winning.

Adapted from **BECOMING A RESONANT LEADER**, by Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis, and Frances Johnston, © Harvard Business School Press, March 2008.