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Who Needs a Leader?

Rickard Hagtorn

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Who Needs a Leader? Rickard Hagtorn
This book is targeted towards anyone seeking personal development inside or outside of work, as a leader or as a proactive follower. Ideally it will function as a support tool for you in your personal development process where you will reference the different sections throughout your career. It has no ambition to answer all questions. It encourages the reader to reflect and research further to achieve growth and a positive development. One ambition with this book is to have a theoretical discussion about what leadership, proactive following, and personal development is, (WHAT) to provide the reader with concrete tools, and to demonstrate the practical implementation of these tools (HOW). One thought that came up early in the process of writing this book was that a leader must have someone to lead, and that creates a relationship. But then came the question, can you not lead yourself? The conclusion would be that that you can. You can be your own leader and take responsibility for your own life and make decisions about your own behavior and your own development. The book ”Leadership and Understanding” by Jorgen Sandberg and Axel Targama further developed what came to be known as proactive following. Management in Lund (MIL) uses this as a foundation for its view on development processes and when I was there for a few days participating in their development workshop, I first came in contact with the term in the context of the relation-ship between a leader and his subordinate. I have chosen to use the word proactive follower instead of sub-ordinate or associate because it better demonstrates the activity and initiative in the relationship with the leader. Leaders and proactive followers have essentially the same need for development and growth. A proactive follower needs knowledge about leadership in order to act correctly. A leader needs to be able to see his or her leadership through the eyes of the and is depending on him or her in this interaction. He also needs the proactive follower’s feedback for his own development. Both parties may therefore use the different chapters and I have not separated the book into different parts for the leader and for the proactive follower, instead I relate to both parties in the text. In the WHAT-part a definition is suggested for what leadership is from a linguistic standpoint, which later leads into a discussion that the reader may either accept or reject as he/she chooses. Sometimes the text is ended with the following phrase: ”Really!” This may be viewed as a laconic statement that the reader can see as a humorous reminder to, like Aristotle, keep a theory in mind without either accepting or rejecting it. The inspiration for this comes from a story about a meeting in which a group of engineers listened to a scientist explaining a highly controversial theory. Not knowing how to react, the group directed its attention to the per-son who was viewed as the most knowledgeable in the group. After a moment of reflection, he said: ”Really!” The expression, in its silent charm, neither accepts nor rejects a theory. Instead it expresses that the person will keep the theory in mind in order to objectively absorb, interpret and seek to understand it. It is in this context that the expression is used in this book. There is also another possible interpretation: that it is a challenge. The reader chooses for himself.

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