BOOK REVIEW

Lead From the Heart
Transformational Leadership for the 21st Century

Mark C. Crowley

Review by

Heinz Landau
Leadership expert, speaker and advisor
Founding Partner and President
Yes, People Matter! Inc., Makati City Philippines

The author

Mark C. Crowley is a leadership consultant, author, and speaker. He spent 25 years in the banking and financial services industry before writing his first book. His mission is to fundamentally change how we lead and manage people. As Senior Vice President of one of America's largest companies in financial services where numbers matter most and people matter least, he used the opposite approach to typical leadership practices and led his division to all-time record sales and profits. In his book, Crowley makes the case that treating others with humanness and care really does work.

The book

In his book, Crowley provides a compelling case for bringing more heart into management and leadership roles. His profound insight draws upon recent medical science discoveries which prove it is the heart, and not the mind, that drives human motivation and achievement. He begins by showing how traditional leadership practices are failing. Across the globe, employee engagement and job satisfaction levels have constantly fallen since decades. People feel undervalued, underappreciated, and underdeveloped.

Our traditional approach to motivating human behavior is entirely disconnected from what employees – human beings – actually need in order to perform to their greatest capacity. Crowley makes the case for a new model of leadership for a new age – a paradigm that acknowledges the humanity – the hearts – in people.

All over the world, people want to work for and contribute to the success of organizations whose values and practices they respect. They want to work for a trustworthy and empowering boss – someone who genuinely cares about them and ensure they are given opportunities to develop and stretch their capabilities. They want reasonable job variety – sufficient to utilize their unique talents – and to have their efforts recognized and sincerely appreciated. And all of these, across the world, take priority over pay.

http://www.odijournal.au.edu/

Crowley cites a study that job satisfaction has become the most critical factor of life satisfaction and wellbeing. Not a surprise considering that employees spend roughly two-thirds of their day at work. People are seeking personal fulfillment from their work.

Making employees feel valued and cared for is by far the most powerful way to motivate them. And the good news for companies is: workers who feel happy and genuinely cared for generate significantly and consistently greater financial performance.

In Part II of his book, Crowley introduces four practices of leading from the heart that are universal and can be expected to be identical with all people you supervise regardless of job and industry, since these practices support the deeply human needs in people.

These four practices are:
1. Hire people with heart: Build a highly engaged team
2. Heart to heart: Connect on a personal level
3. Empower the heart: Maximize employee potential
4. Inspire the heart: Value and honor achievements

Practice # 1.: Leaders must be conscious of the effect and impact every single hire will have on the performance of the team, on its momentum and on its future. You have to resist the temptation to ever make a hire just for the sake of getting an opening filled. You need to find people who exhibit a clear passion for wanting to be part of what you do. Relying on a highly disciplined selection process, as the means to building an exceptional and highly engaged team, is the critically important first step toward achieving superior performance.

Practice #2: Crowley recommends to make time to more personally know the people who work for you. You need to gain insight what motivates and inspires them in their life. You need to show that they matter. Great leaders demonstrate their intent to grow their employees and develop a plan with them.

I liked Crowley's tip how you can grow your own leadership effectiveness. He recommends to ask your sub-ordinate at the end of his development talk: "Please tell me one thing that you think I am doing well as a leader." After probably hearing a lot of positive things, you have one more question to ask: "Please now tell me one thing that I can do better." Reluctantly, your sub-ordinate will come up with an answer. That's a great chance for you to take the feedback, act upon, and improve your own leadership effectiveness. It will inspire loyalty, trust, and support from your sub-ordinate after you have acted upon her or his feedback.

Practice #3: When you convey to employees that you believe in them and that they have much more potential to grow, you will be amazed by how much more they actually can become and contribute. And nothing builds loyalty more than when employees feel you helped them progress in their lives.

Practice #4: Crowley uses a quote of Mother Teresa: "There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread." It is important to acknowledge, value, and honor people for their contributions as a means of inspiring their greatest performance. The

author states that recognition – when given genuinely as an expression of gratitude – is the most powerful and essential leadership practice of all. By encouraging employees, you positively affect their hearts and thereby inspire greater performance.

Conclusion

I highly recommend not only to read Crowley's book, but also to start your own transformational leadership journey while following the engaging leadership practices described in the book. As a person who has in many cases instinctively led from my heart throughout my career, I can assure you that this approach works and will bring you the desired results. I firmly believe that "Lead from the heart" represents the future of leadership. When you lead from the heart, your people will follow.

Reference

Crowley, M. (2011). Lead from the heart: Transformational leadership for the 21st century. IN, USA: Balboa Press