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The Best in Us: People, Profit, and the Remaking of Modern Leadership

Cleve Stevens

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Cleve Stevens has just delivered it."

—DR. SAFWAN SHAH, Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

THE BEST IN US



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Cleve Stevens : The Best in Us: People, Profit, and the Remaking of Modern Leadership before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Best in Us: People, Profit, and the Remaking of Modern Leadership:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Creating Our FutureBy Lucira Jane NebelungIn The Best of Us, Cleve Stevens has written a brilliant and profound book. By the way of full disclosure, I know Cleve. We connected a number of times over the past couple of years and I can see "fingerprints" of this in the book. This being said... it is

evident that it is written from the wisdom of personal experience rather than academic research or observation. The book feels like we are in a direct conversation with Cleve and we get to know him as a person. The book is highly readable and fully engages at the human level. While the content is focused on mastering what he calls Transformative Leadership (TL), this book is not just for people in leadership roles. It is a call for all of us to lead, not manage, our lives. As Cleve points out, most people in positions of authority are not true leaders. To be a transformative leader we must first transform ourselves and he skillfully shows us how to do this. What I most appreciate about *The Best of Us* is that it did not reduce leadership to a list of characteristics or action steps but rather confronts each of us with the truth of what it means to be a leader, which means being the best we possibly can be. If you think you already are achieving your full potential, I strongly recommend that you read this book and you will know that you are not. I also appreciate the ongoing and clear distinctions that Cleve makes throughout the book: leading vs managing; transactional vs transformational leading; option vs possibility; responsibility vs accountability; and team vs functional group to name a few. Cleve clearly exemplifies the principles he is talking about through the way he shares the concepts and style in which he writes. It is straightforward that at times is "in our face" without any BS. It conveys a radical honesty that won't let the reader "off the hook." Leading is about being fully who we are not just what we do. Again, the book is not a prescriptive set of leadership characteristics. Rather, he shares a process for being and becoming a true leader by first leading one's own life. If we are to lead our lives, we need to "take ourselves on" and confront our "stuff." Only then can we break free from the prison and tyranny of conforming to our personal and cultural conditioning with our unconscious and automatic reactions. The book gives us the permission and the way to do this with the challenge and support of guided activities that are both personal and practical. Cleve enables us to look in the mirror at the anatomy and physiology of our ego-structure of self-limiting beliefs that we deny, protect and/or defend. At a conceptual level he covers a lot of territory, integrating the physical, emotional, cognitive, psychological and physiological bases for our behaviors and actions. It is a unifying look at ourselves (and leading) that is ontological, philosophical, psychological and biological. Parts of the book may make us feel uncomfortable about who we have been relative to who we think we are. Discomfort is a good thing. Perhaps we will act on this dissonance and choose to become an adult, acknowledging that we are responsible, meaning we are the causal agent for creating life. He wisely leaves the bulk of organizational process and practices to the later book chapters and the appendix; we do not need to be a leader of an organization to value what this book has to offer. The book speaks to our individual growth and mastery as a human being, thereby contributing to creating our individual and collective future. The title is really an invitation to become our truest and best selves. If we are in a leadership role, we also make a commitment to enable others to reach their greatness as well. This review would not be complete if I didn't comment on what is most near and dear to my heart: Leading as Love. Cleve mentions the centrality of love rather than fear as the primary of two organizing principles for organizations. The second principle is to achieve excellence at every level (which if based in love, we will). What is missing is a description of what is meant by love. Love that generates greatness in ourselves and others is a philosophy, an intention, a commitment to a way of being and of living that fulfills our four universal, innate human needs of belonging and contribution, purpose and meaning, self-determination and choice, and growth and mastery. The four associated facets of love that meet these needs: care about one another's well-being, understand without judgment, respect without control and respond with unconditioned presence. We experience love when all facets are present, when there is an integrated expression of care, understanding, respect and responsiveness. These overcome our primal fear-based emotions that Cleve shares in the book: anxiety over lack of security/support, shame over being inadequate and anger over not having control. When we love, we lead. When we truly lead, we love. Love makes a leader a leader. It is through love that we establish common ground that serves the greater good. So, whether we are in a leadership role or not, if we are willing to take on the challenge, this book expertly guides us to be The Best In Us. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book....a must read! By Steve Mariucci "The Best In Us" is a comprehensive guide to realizing the rewards of transformational leadership on many levels including business, family, personal, and spiritual. This book is important for anyone who understands that there is so much more to life than we typically acknowledge on a day-to-day basis. Cleve provides a no-nonsense, sequential approach for those who want to become truly intentional about improving the quality of their life. Every time I pick up "The Best In Us" I feel energized about bringing my true personal vision to reality. "The Best In Us" is also a great read...fast-paced, interesting, entertaining, fun. In "The Best In Us," Cleve provides the roadmap to a more meaningful, more successful, happier, and better life. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Run, do not walk, away from this book/course! By C. Lane Hugely derivative drivel. It's not to say that there are not some useful nuggets embedded, but you've probably seen them elsewhere. The real issue is that he forces the reader (and those who pony up for his corporate training) into the victim posture so that he can save them from themselves. It's a very self-serving approach meant to drive his business and does as much harm as good to some people.

We have lost sight of the big picture, forgetting that success cannot be measured in profit alone. This narrow focus, particularly from our political and corporate leaders, is one of the primary reasons for our continuing economic crisis.

We need a fresh approach to leadership to turn things around. This new leadership must focus on the people who help generate the profits in addition to the profits themselves. In our hyper-connected world of instant information and democratic openness, the importance of a strong community only grows, and companies that continue to neglect their community are poised for failure. Hope for a healthy economy can be found in the untapped talent of our people—and in a commitment to excellence as the means for awakening that talent. In *The Best in Us*, leadership expert and social ethicist Dr. Cleve Stevens, offers a daring and radical new take on leading that emphasizes the rigorous development of leaders and followers. It's the people-centric organizations, the ones fueled by a drive for excellence, that will be the most profitable in the coming decades. The new approach, called transforming integrative leadership, or simply transformative leadership, is a compelling, highly effective step-by-step process. Dr. Stevens shows what the transformative organization looks like and precisely how the intended growth for the individual, the organization, and the bottom line is achieved. The transforming integrative approach outlined in *The Best in Us* is our best way forward. It's the first brave but necessary step toward a healthy business climate and a reinvigorated global economy.

"This is not a book you read once and take away a few key points and then fit in a few small changes as you continue on with your busy life. It's an owner's manual that should be consulted often, if for no other reason than to constantly remind you that you are a leader, not a passenger or a guest, that you have the power to drive your own life, inspire others, and find fulfillment in what you do each and every day."-- Phil Kumnick, Head of Global Acquirer Processing, Visa, Inc. "The Best in Us is a systematic and thoughtful approach toward a new model of leadership that has the power to make a fundamental change for both an individual leader and those they lead. Cleve skillfully combines history, mythology, psychology, current events, and modern leadership thinking to engage the reader in a process whereby they may re-consider their own leadership values."-- Dr. Robert Kovach, Director, Cisco Center for Collaborative Leadership, Cisco Systems, Inc. "The Best in Us is a creative and imaginative guide to a better understanding of the crucial potentials of leadership studies."-- James MacGregor Burns, Historian, Leadership Scholar and Pulitzer-Prize-winning Author of *Roosevelt and the groundbreaking work, Leadership* "The Best in Us is a breakthrough book that shows leaders how to build companies by believing in themselves and their people . . . [It] reminds us that the greatest treasure within organizations is the potential within its people . . . People can be inspired to tap into their very best, and when this happens, magic happens. The paradox is that when people give their all, profits soar--beyond anyone's wildest dreams."-- Ryan C. Mack, President, Optimum Capital Management; Author, *Living in the Village*; On-Air Business Analyst for CNN, CNBC, BET "If there is a grand unification theory for modern leadership, Cleve Stevens has just delivered it. In the four days it took me to read *The Best in Us* cover to cover I felt remade, rewired, renewed, and reinvigorated . . . A must read for entrepreneurs, founders, and corporate and community leaders."-- Dr. Safwan Shah, University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business; Founder, Infonox, Inc. "If there is a grand unification theory for modern leadership, Cleve Stevens has just delivered it. In the four days it took me to read *The Best in Us* cover to cover I felt remade, rewired, renewed, and reinvigorated . . . A must read for entrepreneurs, founders, and corporate and community leaders. -- --Dr. Safwan Shah, University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business; Founder, Infonox, Inc. "The Best in Us is a breakthrough book that shows leaders how to build companies by believing in themselves and their people . . . [It] reminds us that the greatest treasure within organizations is the potential within its people . . . People can be inspired to tap into their very best, and when this happens, magic happens. The paradox is that when . . . people give their all, profits soar--beyond anyone's wildest dreams. -- --Ryan C. Mack, President, Optimum Capital Management; Author, *Living in the Village*; On-Air Business Analyst for CNN, CNBC, BET "This is not a book you read once and take away a few key points and then fit in a few small changes as you continue on with your busy life. It's an owner's manual that should be consulted often, if for no other reason than to constantly remind you that you are a leader, not a passenger or a guest, that you have the power to drive your own life, inspire others, and find fulfillment in what you do each and every day. -- --Phil Kumnick, Head of Global Acquirer Processing, Visa, Inc. "From the Inside Flap As Cleve Stevens boldly asserts, it is our unexamined perspective on leadership, the organization, and business that has led us into our current economic mess. But there is hope for our future, and it comes from within, residing in the untapped talents of our people. In *The Best in Us*, leadership expert and social ethicist Cleve W. Stevens, PhD, presents a radical new take on leadership that emphasizes human development over profit. When leaders understand their primary role as a catalytic agent in their people's personal and professional development, the organization is prepared to soar, no matter its size. This new approach to leadership, called transforming integrative leadership, or simply transformative leadership, is outlined as an easy-to-use, highly effective step-by-step process. Stevens clearly shows what the new model organization looks like and how ideal growth is achieved. Transformative leadership is the first step toward a healthy economy. About the Author Cleve Stevens has worked in leadership development for twenty-five years. He holds a bachelor's degree from the UC Irvine, a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a PhD in social ethics from the USC. Cleve has taught at the graduate and undergraduate level and has published numerous articles on leadership and the psychology of leadership. Dr. Stevens is the founder and president of the Los Angeles based leadership consulting

firm, Owl Sight Intentions, Inc.