Practical Ways
to Lead an
INNOVATIVE
ORGANIZATION

MODERN MANAGEMENT MADE EASY: BOOK 3

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Practical Ways to Lead an Innovative Organization

Modern Management Made Easy, Book 3

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Introduction

Several years ago, I wrote a series of articles I called "management myths." They each described how I'd seen managers act so that the manager created the opposite result from the one they wanted. Yes, the manager's actions created precisely the opposite effect.

I wrote a myth a month for 36 months.

I assumed as the world transitioned to agile approaches or approaches where teams, managers, and organizations needed more resilience, that managers would change. I thought no one needed to read about the myths in a world where we want collaborative, cross-functional, self-managing teams.

I was wrong.

As I worked with more managers who wanted to use agile approaches, I realized these problems:

- Existing management practices didn't work at all for agile teams or teams that need to exhibit adaptability and resilience.
- Those practices didn't work for managers who wanted to lead and serve others.
- These practices actively prevented innovation.

Leaders, teams, and innovators succeeded despite their management.

And, in an organization attempting to transform to an agile culture? The more the managers tried to make old patterns work, the less agility anyone exhibited.

Why did these smart people behave in ways that didn't make sense?

They didn't know they had options.

These managers had never witnessed useful management, never mind excellent management. They tried to do the best job they could. And, they perpetuated what they'd experienced, or possibly even learned in school. They practiced what they'd seen—the old ways of management.

It's time for real modern management.

Modern managers have enormous challenges. They feel as if they are between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

How can you become a modern manager when the system, the culture, is based on old thinking and old practices?

Carefully.

I've divided the original essays into three books. Book 1, *Practical Ways to Manage Yourself*, asks you to consider how you can manage and respect yourself to build congruence and integrity in your actions.

Book 2, *Practical Ways to Lead and Serve (Manage) Others*, explains how you can serve a harmonic whole. The entire team or group can then work together in a culture of transparency and trust.

This third book explores ways to create a human and innovative culture in your organization, so you can use the ideas of trust and integrity to create a place where people want to work.

You might feel many constraints in your situation. As you read these books, you might nod and say, "Yes, I can do that." And, you might shake your head at some ideas and say, "Not going to touch that here. Nope, not at all."

I do hope you consider each essay as a possible experiment for your management practice. You have options.

Who Are the People in These

Essays?

You might wonder about my use of names and gender in these books. For example, you might never have seen women as senior managers. I have seen men and women as senior managers. I've been a senior manager.

My experience tells me that a given gender does not equate to great or unfortunate management skills. Neither does a person's country of origin or any other kind of individual demographic.

To help you see what the management world could be, I've created parity across genders. I've used names of people I've worked with or admired. Even with that, I've changed all the names to protect the innocent and the guilty.

I've had the good fortune to meet and work with male and female managers worldwide. In almost every circumstance, the managers have done the best they could, given their company's environment and culture. The manager's gender didn't matter.

The company's environment mattered more than anything. You might—or might not—see the variety of people in roles that I write about here.

Through my work, I've recognized several principles that create great management and build healthy organizational cultures.

All three books build on these principles:

1. Clarify purpose—for you, the team, and the organization.
2. Build empathy with the people who do the work.
3. Build a safe environment. People work better when they can trust you, their colleagues, and the organization as a whole.
4. Seek outcomes by optimizing for an overarching goal.
5. Encourage experiments and learning.

6. Catch people succeeding.
7. Exercise value-based integrity as a model for the people you lead and serve.

If you can exercise these principles, you will gain these effects:

- Respect—for yourself, for the team, and for the purpose of the organization.
- Trust—possibly with boundaries—to encourage the behaviors and outcomes you want.
- Team-based approaches to working at all levels of the organization.

All three books explain some of the trickier parts of management. You'll get the most value if you read all three books.

As you read the dialogue in the essays, remember that I said most of these things to my managers. You might see these conversations as insubordination.

I didn't feel as if I was insubordinate. I used the principle of congruence to have conversations where my manager and I cared about the outcome, each other, and discovered our best possible outcome for the situation.

You and I are different people. How I frame conversations might not work for you. You will find *your* best ways to describe the situation and influence your manager.

You can practice human and humane management that produces superior results for your organization. You can respect yourself, the people you serve, and the entire organization as well as customers. You can act with integrity. And, you can have empathy without being a pushover.

You might worry—will you still be able to obtain the necessary financial results you want? Yes, innovative leaders create an environment that balances short-term needs—including financial—with a culture of innovation and change.

Management is an honorable profession. We need managers—great, congruent managers who can use their interpersonal skills to get the best out of themselves first. Then, they can extend those skills to the people they serve and across the organization.

This book is about how you might create an environment that promotes innovation. I'll suggest many options you can consider to ease your management and encourage innovation.

Let's start.