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THE *BEST* IN US

People, Profit and the Remaking of Modern Leadership

by Dr. Cleve W. Stevens

Amidst Crisis of Confidence in Our Leaders, Failing Global Economy, A Greed-Prone, Corrupt Financial System, and General Malaise of Spirit, New Book Offers Hopeful Prescription for Lasting Systemic Change.

Bold New Book Lays Out Vivid Principles and Methodology for Leaders and Their People’s Deep Personal and Professional Development—A Foundation That Allows for Radical, Results-Based Model in Business, Politics, and All Areas of Organizational Leadership.

A Guidebook For the New Leader of the New Millennium

Book Website at: www.TheBestInUsbook.com

[Los Angeles, June 4, 2012] - Faced with a failure of nerve on the part of our business and political leaders, a struggling global economy, a greed-prone, corrupt financial system, and an elusive search for something new, a cutting-edge book defines and maps out a boldly transformative, post-partisan way of seeing leadership and leading life that can reinvigorate our business and political systems, and society itself.

"THE *BEST* IN US: People, Profit and the Remaking of Modern Leadership"

(Beaufort Books, 416 pp, pub date: July 9, 2012, Print ISBN: 978-0-8253-0684-6, Ebook: 978-0-8253-0620-4) by prominent social ethicist and expert on the psychology of leadership, Dr. Cleve W. Stevens, president of Los Angeles-based Owl Sight Intentions, Inc.

(www.owlsightintentions.com), articulates a simple yet powerful process for moving past self-imposed limitations as leaders and as the people who follow them.

This process, called “transformative leadership” (TL)_{tm} by the author, serves as a platform for a radical, courageous new take on leadership, one that unites the drive for excellence with the urge for growth and improved performance of both the leader and followers within the organization.

Cleve Stevens argues for a new transformative way of leadership and doing business that puts People ABOVE Profits. The book has been endorsed by historian and leadership scholar **James MacGregor Burns**; **Dr. Safwan Shah**, University of California at Berkeley (Haas School of Business); **Dr. Robert Kovach**, Director, Cisco Center for Collaborative Leadership, Cisco

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Systems Inc.; **Phil Kumnick**, Head of Global Acquirer Processing Visa Inc.; and **Ryan C. Mack**, Author, *Living in the Village* and On-Air Business Analyst for CNN, CNBC and BET.

“Our old ways of thinking seem powerless before the seemingly implacable nightmares we face as a society: a worldwide economic meltdown and its painful, slow-burning ‘recovery,’ a disappearing middle class...old and new wars raging in the Middle East,” writes the author. “Whether nightmares of our own making or not, they are nightmares nonetheless, *our* nightmares. And they demand a new and better way of understanding and thinking, of being and doing. Continuing to do what we have been doing is not working. Indeed, to continue in the same manner and expect a different and better outcome, as the saying goes, amounts to insanity,” Stevens writes.

Noting the egregious behavior of banking powers like Goldman Sachs and others (not to mention the most recent 2 billion dollar scandal under the stewardship of Jamie Dimon at JPMorgan Chase), or the ethical faultiness in responsibility of a Rupert Murdoch, Stevens says that as troubling as all this is, these “recent disturbing revelations of malfeasance are not the real problem... They are the symptom, the inevitable consequence of a wrongheaded understanding of what it means to lead an organization... This corruption, the transformative approach says, is the unavoidable result of the ascendant business and business leadership rationale,” a rationale that claims *extrinsic rewards and results*—monetary rewards in particular—as the sole reason for the organization’s existence, and, therefore, people merely as the de facto means to that end.

“When we begin to buy into an ethic that declares shareholder value as the only value, we have set ourselves on a course, as we are now seeing, that ultimately and inevitably leads to bust. From the transformative point-of-view... what is clear is that the profit principle as the exclusive rationale for doing business seems *not* to work, at least not anymore, surely not in the ways we’re applying it.

“The angry protests *across* the political spectrum are clearly warranted. Most of us understand that the pain and suffering we’ve created demand a voice. But the simplistic explanations of the right (bloated government is to blame) and the left (the greed of Wall Street is to blame) miss the larger point,” contends Dr. Stevens.

And the larger point? We need to fundamentally rethink our understanding of leadership, of business, and of the organization. The author cites Stephen Green, then Chairman of global financial giant HSBC and now Britain’s Conservative minister of trade, who challenges “the twentieth century laissez-faire philosophy of Milton Friedman, saying ‘Of course you need a profit, but [profit] is a by-product, a hallmark of success. It is not the be all and end all. It is not the *raison d’être* of business... What is the purpose of business? Friedman says the social responsibility of business is to make a profit but that will no longer do.’”

Concurring with Green’s sentiment, “The *Best In Us*” calls for a major shift in leadership values and the organization’s priorities. Rather than profit, *people* must be the endgame of business, of politics, and of any other organizational endeavor. The book argues that when leaders and their

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people are unleashed to develop their talent and ingenuity to the fullest, and they do so in the legitimate pursuit of excellence, then the culture of the organization (however large or small) soars, along with the top and bottom lines. In fact, Stevens contends (with clear rationale and supporting evidence), the transformative model out-profits the profit-as-everything model.

In a book of 26 chapters (plus Introduction and Epilogue) and divided into three parts, “The *Best In Us*” focuses on the leader as the primary catalytic agent in this transformative process and is “their leadership lives) could be more effective and meaningful, “those who may have figured out that how they lead others is a direct reflection of how they show up in the rest of their lives.” In other words, “It’s for those who would like to *live* life rather than merely survive it,” which is precisely what most people do most of the time, Stevens says. “Rocks and trees and lizards survive, for heaven’s sake, but as human beings we have the possibility to *live* life. Really live it.” Thus, the second part of the book, which focuses on the individual leader’s growth process, can be of value for anyone who seeks significant, even “radical personal development.”

Part I (Chapters 1-3) describes the basics of the transformative model, differentiating it from the dominant, conventional approach to leadership, called the “transactional” method (where the leader/follower relationship is based on an exchange or transaction, of, labor for wages, let’s say), and it distinguishes the transformative method from the “transformational” approach that emerged in the last two decades of the twentieth century. It characterizes *transformative* journey as a movement, or fundamental shift, from a mindset that at best “manages” life or reacts to what life sends its way, to a mindset of “leading” life, of intentionally and consciously causing life (and leadership) to happen.

Part II (Chapters 4-17) is for those leaders who have a deep desire to see greater levels of excellence in both their leadership and in their lives in general: greater meaning, greater joy, greater love, and a greater sense of power and personal effectiveness. Over the course of nine of the sections chapters the individual leader is challenged to recognize and do the work of surmounting largely unconscious, unwarranted and unnecessarily limiting self-perceptions—“that every person walking the planet has. Period,” declares the author. “Transformative leaders, and powerful people in general, have the capacity and the guts to uncover their limiting beliefs and then grow past them,” he says. “They have the ability to change their minds (literally and permanently!) and thus liberate their capacity to lead at a truly powerful level.” Part II guides the reader through that growth process, step by step.

Part III (Chapters 18-26) addresses the *doingness* of the transformative model, articulating what a transformative leader and organization actually look like and what the leader and organization must do to create this type of exceptional organization, one accustomed to extraordinary results. In this final section of the book, “The *Best In Us*” shows how a development-based, people-centric leadership model is anything but soft, how in fact accountability, expectation, and even demand go up, not down, and how, simultaneously, satisfaction and a sense of purpose—for the leaders and followers—also rise. Part III demonstrates how the logic and poetry of the transformative model thrives on a commitment to excellence and to an expanded range of

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measurable results. In the final analysis “[the transformative approach] simply makes sense,” Dr. Stevens points out. “It’s not the least bit counter-intuitive.”

Ultimately, “The *Best* in Us” represents a systematic and thoughtful attempt to cajole, encourage, and otherwise inspire the leader to re-think what he or she has decided is possible and what isn’t possible, as individuals, as leaders of organizations, and as members and de facto leaders of society. Throughout the book, Stevens references many of the great thinkers and leaders - from Aristotle to Copernicus, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Gandhi to Margaret Mead, from Herb Kelleher to Richard Branson to Steve Jobs—(not to mention several clients from his own practice) all of whom irreverently defied (and defy) what he calls the “world of agreement.”

The world of agreement, he says, “is the largely unexamined, unrecognized...set of standards and rules that make up key elements of our culture and our individual lives. These standards and rules tell us what is good and bad, what is acceptable and what is not, and perhaps most important, what is doable and what isn’t.” It’s made up of beliefs we’ve adopted, “usually without being aware [that these beliefs] even exist at all, let alone that we’ve adopted them...[It] is an unconscious, internalized status quo, one that we have accepted as immutable, eternal truth.” Without us ever knowing it, the world of agreement rules major aspects of our lives and our leadership, in many instances dramatically, and entirely without warrant, limiting what we achieve.

The transformative leader has learned to see, challenge, and transcend the world of agreement in order, as “The *Best* In Us” says, to disclose new and better possibilities for the follower, the organization, and for the larger society. “What distinguishes the transformative leader is his come-from, the deeper rationale for his actions, all of his actions,” writes Dr. Stevens. “That rationale is simple: to do only that which grows [our] followers and [ourselves] and, as a result, produces ever-increasing levels of excellence and accomplishment throughout the organization.”

Dr. Stevens is not naïve about the deeply entrenched thinking of the “fear-based, largely unprofitable yet profit-obsessed” model of most business organizations. “But crisis always creates openings for better ways of understanding,” he says. “And ‘The *Best* In Us’ represents an invitation, for those pioneering men and women who are ready to disclose a new and better world—a better world that a beleaguered humanity longs for today.

“This is the challenge of the book, and it may well be the challenge of the twenty-first century: how do we bravely meet a future so pregnant with both danger and possibility such that we summon our personal promise, even our greatness, and at the same time stand with unequivocal commitment and emerging compassion for the promise and well-being of our fellow human beings the world over?”

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