

Lynne Cunningham's  
Book Review

*I just read a great book that I think should be added to your Service Excellence Library.*

<b>Book</b>	<i>True North</i>
<b>Author</b>	Bill George
<b>Pillar of Excellence</b>	Leadership – really covers them all
<b>Book Description</b>	<p>When top executives sit down to write a book, the result is often a celebratory memoir or an upbeat treatise on how you can emulate their success. Bill George has chosen to produce neither, and readers are the luckier for it. Instead, the former Medtronic CEO and current Harvard Business School professor has teamed up with co-author Peter Sims to offer a practical, inspiring examination of the executive experience, <i>True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership</i>. While the volume is a sequel to George's 2003 best-seller, <i>Authentic Leadership</i>, it easily stands alone as a guide to locating what the authors call "the internal compass that guides you successfully through life."</p> <p>At the heart of <i>True North</i> is a series of interviews with 125 managers, from Novartis CEO Daniel Vasella to Palm co-founder Donna Dubinsky. George and Sims indulge in a few anecdotes that flatter their subjects. But they also get interviewees to talk about failures, emotional challenges, personal tragedies, regrets—in short, life events that knocked them off typical career paths. Taken together, the stories illustrate <i>True North's</i> thesis: that there is no single way to become an ideal leader. The volume is both memorable and perceptive.</p> <p><i>True North</i> has three parts. The first is an anecdote-rich section that describes what it means to be an "authentic leader" and examines how various people arrived at this status or lost their way. There's Kevin Sharer, who abandoned General Electric for MCI, only to find that he was miserable and that Jack Welch wouldn't take him back. ("Hey, Kevin, forget you ever worked here," Welch told him.) Sharer learned patience and humility and went on to become chairman of Amgen. The key experience for Novartis' Vasella, in contrast, came from childhood: He endured years of illness and learned the value of compassion in health care.</p> <p>The book's second section, which focuses on the five key facets of a leadership plan, is its most useful. First comes "knowing your authentic self," i.e., learning to be self-aware. This proved difficult for David Pottruck, a former CEO of Charles Schwab who found that his long workdays and aggressiveness made colleagues resent and distrust him. His answer, on the job and in his third marriage, was to force himself to seek feedback on a regular basis. Next, after you attain a measure of self-awareness, you should focus on the values and principles that matter to you. David Gergen and Jon Huntsman, both of whom served in the Nixon White House and experienced the Watergate scandal up close, had to learn to draw ethical lines. Huntsman recalls that "an amoral atmosphere permeated the White House." The growing realization, highlighted by a request to entrap a politician, prompted him to leave.</p> <p>A third step in the construction of a leadership plan is discovering what motivates you. The most successful leaders, the authors learn, rarely start out wanting to get rich. They are inspired to make a difference, to test their limits, to follow a passion. In many cases, they abandon secure posts for the unknown. Fourth in the authors' scheme is building a support team. Here, we read that many in Silicon Valley, including Palm's Dubinsky, were aided by Intuit Chairman Bill Campbell, whom George calls the "dean of mentoring." Howard Shultz of Starbucks found inspiration in management guru Warren Bennis. Finally, you should try to forge what George and Sims call "an integrated life" that augments work with such things as family, friends, community service, exercise, church, and whatever else matters in your life.</p> <p><i>True North's</i> last section deals with empowering the people around you. The authors ask leaders—including many women (more than in any other part of the book)—to talk about the higher calling of their work. Avon Products' Andrea Jung explains that "what we do is elevate women in the community," while Anne Mulcahy of Xerox talks about trying to motivate personnel as the company struggled to stave off bankruptcy. As elsewhere in the book, this is no victory lap. At one point, Mulcahy recounts pulling over on a highway after a tough day, saying to herself: "I don't know where to go. I don't want to go home. There's just no place to go."</p>

	Most readers will relate to at least some of the subjects' struggles, whether they involve watching a sibling die or fighting to keep ego from getting in the way of results. These people come across as fallible, emotional, and, yes, authentic. A series of exercises at the end of each chapter may help readers evaluate their priorities and practices. While <i>True North</i> offers no simple answers, it provides plenty of fodder to help readers figure out for themselves how to become a leader. ( <i>Business Week</i> , March 12, 2007)
<b>LC Review</b>	Excellent – a must read for any leader seeking validation that having integrity and being true to your personal values makes good business sense. The exercises are thought-provoking and can lead to powerful introspection or team dialogue.
<b>Studer Group Coach Paul Grizzell's Review</b>	I worked at Medtronic when Bill George was CEO. He was a leader who led that organization with the utmost integrity. He aligned the organization unconditionally with the Medtronic Mission – a six point mission that aligns very closely with the Studer Group pillars. He was a no-nonsense leader who always asked “How will this affect the patient?” – the ultimate user of Medtronic products that “alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life.” The company was phenomenally successful during Bill's tenure, with their market capitalization growing an average of 35% per year. When he left, his successor was much more focused on driving costs out of the business – and the stock price has languished. Bill's book is a practical roadmap for how to discover and develop the purposeful, personal leadership skills within each of us. Having worked for Bill, I know the roadmap leads to a destination to which I aspire.
<b>Page</b>	<i>Lynne suggests that you pay special attention to some of these features in the book.</i>
<b>xxiii+</b>	True North is the internal compass that guides you successfully through life. It represents who you are as a human being at your deepest level. It is your orienting point – your fixed point in a spinning world – that helps you stay on track as a leader. Your True North is based on what is most important to you, your most cherished values, your passions and motivations, the source of satisfaction in your life. Although others may guide or influence you, your truth is derived from your life story, and only you can determine what it should be. Discovering your True North takes a lifetime of commitment and learning. When you get too far off course, your internal compass tells you that something is wrong and you need to reorient yourself.
<b>xxviii</b>	You can discover your authentic leadership right now. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You do not have to be born with the characteristics or traits of a leader.</li> <li>• You do not have to wait for a tap on the shoulder.</li> <li>• You do not have to be at the top of your organization.</li> <li>• You can step up and lead at any point in your life.</li> </ul>
<b>xxxi+</b>	Five dimensions of an authentic leader: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pursuing purpose with passion</li> <li>2. Practicing solid values</li> <li>3. Leading with heart</li> <li>4. Establishing enduring relationships</li> <li>5. Demonstrating self-discipline</li> </ol>

	Becoming an authentic leader is not easy. First, you have to understand yourself, because the hardest person you will ever have to lead is yourself. Second to be an effective leader, you must take responsibility for your own development.
<b>8</b>	Virtually all the leaders interviewed found their passion to lead through the uniqueness of their life stories.
<b>17</b>	Because many people are living well into their nineties these days, the leader's journey follows the new span of life and subdivides into three periods, each of roughly thirty years. Each stage of the journey opens up a myriad of opportunities for leadership. Phase I is "Preparing for Leadership." Phase II is "Leading". Phase III is for "Giving Back".
<b>33</b>	In observing leaders who have derailed, we identified five types who lose sight of their True North. Their shortcomings link directly to the failure to develop themselves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imposters who lack self-awareness and self-esteem</li> <li>2. Rationalizers who deviate from their values</li> <li>3. Glory Seekers who are motivated by seeking the world's acclaim</li> <li>4. Loners who fail to build personal support structures</li> <li>5. Shooting Stars who lack the grounding of an integrated life</li> </ol>
<b>44</b>	To become authentic leaders, we must discard the myth that leadership means having legions of supporters following our direction as we ascend to the pinnacles of power. Only then can we realize that authentic leadership is about empowering others on their journeys.  This shift is the transformation from "I" to "We."
<b>46</b>	The Crucible is an experience that tests leaders to their limits. A crucible can be triggered by events such as confronting a difficult situation at work, receiving critical feedback, or losing your job. Or it may result from a painful personal experience such as divorce, illness, or the death of a loved one.
<b>65+</b>	The compass is a dynamic tool that you can update and calibrate after every experience to ensure that each step you take on your leadership journey is consistent with how you want to lead your life. When each part of your compass is well developed, you will be pointed toward your True North. Five major areas of your personal development as a leader: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Awareness</li> <li>2. Values</li> <li>3. Motivations</li> <li>4. Support Team</li> <li>5. Integrated Life</li> </ol>
<b>69</b>	When the seventy-five members of the Stanford Graduate School of Business Advisory Council were asked to recommend the most important capability for leaders to develop, their answer was nearly unanimous: self-awareness.

72	One of the most difficult things in becoming self-aware is seeing ourselves as others see us.
76	Knowing yourself can be compared to peeling back the layers of an onion as you search for your true self.
86	The values that form the basis for your True North are derived from your beliefs and convictions. Leadership principles are values translated into action.
101	One way leaders understand their ethical boundaries is to use the <i>New York Times</i> test. Before proceeding with any action, ask yourself, "How would I feel if this entire situation, including transcripts of our discussions, was printed on the first page of the <i>New York Times</i> ?"
112+	The term <i>motivated capabilities</i> is used to describe the alignment of your motivations with your strongest capabilities in order to find the <i>sweet spot</i> for your leadership.
135	Authentic leaders are constantly aware of the importance of staying grounded.
148	What does it mean to live your life with integrity? Real integrity results from integrating all aspects of your life so that you are true to yourself in all settings.
152	The Effectiveness of Authentic Leaders – the steps <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shared purpose</li> <li>2. Empower other leaders</li> <li>3. Build influence through style and power</li> <li>4. Achieve results</li> <li>5. Build reputation and gain responsibility</li> </ol>
164	A leader is someone who brings people together to pursue a shared purpose.
174+	<b>Mutual Respect: The Basis for Empowerment.</b> Here are some of the things leaders do to gain respect of their colleagues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating others as equals</li> <li>• Being a good listener</li> <li>• Learning from people</li> <li>• Sharing life stories</li> </ul>
176+	<b>Empowering People to Lead</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing up</li> <li>• Engaging/helping teammates</li> <li>• Challenging leaders</li> <li>• Stretching people</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligning everyone around a mission</li> </ul>	
<b>191</b>	<b>Leadership Styles</b>	
	Directive leaders	Demand compliance and obedience with rules
	Engaged leaders	Mobilize people around shared purpose and values
	Coaching leaders	Develop people for leadership roles
	Consensus leaders	Build agreement through participation
	Affiliative leaders	Create emotional bonds and harmony
	Expert leaders	Expect competence and self-direction
<b>194</b>	Your style and your use of power are inextricably linked. Your style conveys your sense of power, just as the way your use of power is reflected in your leadership style.	
<b>198</b>	The bottom line for all leaders is to optimize their effectiveness to achieve superior long-term results.	
<b>Appendix C</b>	Excellent leadership questions to help you get the most from this book.	
<b>Overall rating</b>	Excellent – a must read. This will be on my recommended reading list for 2007 – go ahead and start reading it now.	
<b>Publisher and Year Published</b>	John Wiley & Sons	2007
<b>Price</b>	\$27.95	Discounted on Amazon
<b>Recommended by</b>	Studer Group colleague Paul Grizzell who worked for Bill George at Medtronic and made sure I got a copy autographed by the author!	

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