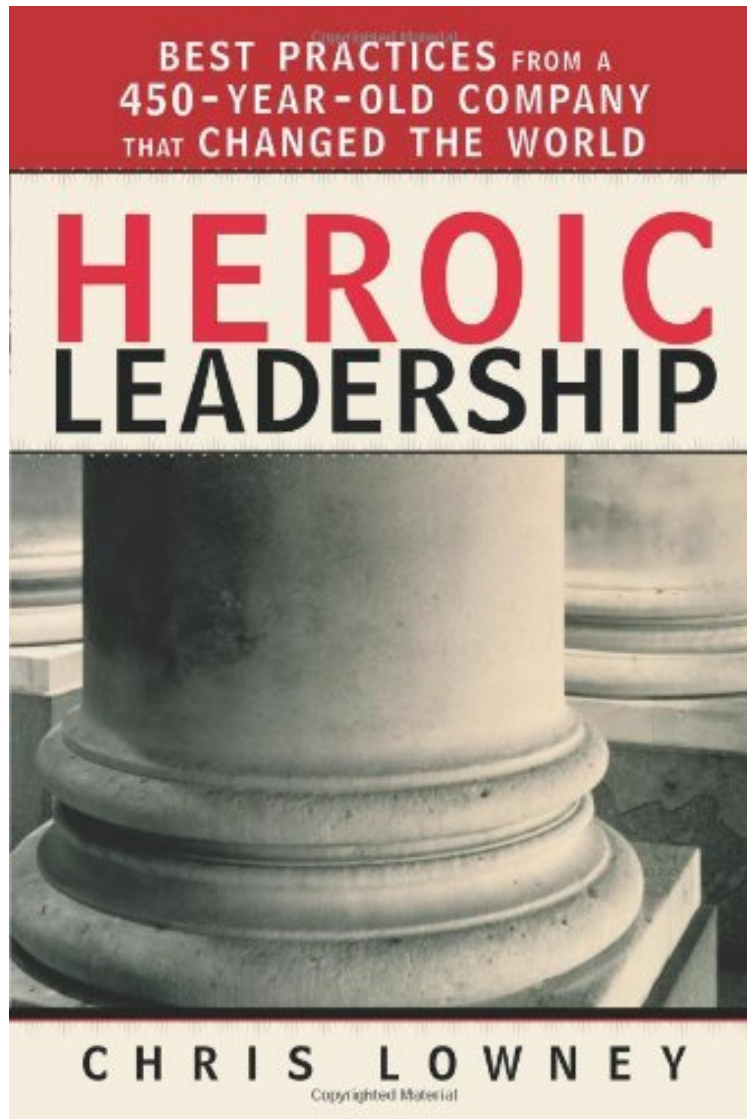


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Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World: Best Practices from a 450 Year Old Company That Changed the World

Chris Lowney

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Chris Lowney : Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World: Best Practices from a 450 Year Old Company That Changed the World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World: Best Practices from a 450 Year Old Company That Changed the World:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read for Our Nation's Leaders
By NLC
In my opinion this book holds the key to our nation's future ... a return to moralistic, inspirational and humble leadership motivated by the good in mankind. It reads easily, like historical fiction; yet it is true. For those in the military services, it is an excellent example of the power of "mission command."

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Company Truly Built to Last
By David Achenbach
I first read this book about a year ago when participating in a class on understanding the Jesuit heritage of my place of work. I re-read it on the plane a couple of days ago returning from an overseas location where we recently established a program. The first time around I thought it was wonderful; re-reading it, I found it both wonderful and also profoundly relevant to our new enterprise.

Lowney takes as his thesis the idea that the same precepts that have animated the success of the Jesuit order can likewise inspire personal and business accomplishment. I have to say he has me convinced. He boils down concepts - like *Cura Personalis*, *Magis*, and *Ad majorem dei gloriam* - that will be familiar to those who attended Jesuit schools to what he describes as the four integrated "pillars" of leadership: Self-awareness, Ingenuity, Love and Heroism. He then uses the history of the Jesuit order to demonstrate how, through application of the four pillars, the Society of Jesus grew from a motley band of 10 likeminded University students of different nationalities, with no agenda beyond doing work "to help souls," to become arguably the most successful and influential Catholic religious order.

Lowney's work is not without controversy, especially his contention that the Jesuit's' leadership lessons can be replicated minus their overtly religious agenda. No doubt the order's founder, Inigo (Latinized to Ignatius) of Loyola - for whom doing it "for the glory of God" was all that mattered - would disapprove. However secular research would suggest that the 16th century Basque had some very profound insights that have application beyond turning back the tide of the Reformation and making converts worldwide. I have to say I find Ignatius to be an intensely attractive character, not least because he advocated active engagement in the world, not withdrawal from it. Here's a guy who for most his life just can't get it quite right - and who along the way experiences some incredible reverses - but who never stops trying to perfect his muddled thinking. He just keeps plugging away until it starts to become clear. And it turns out that it's his very lack of success that leads to his deepest insight: that an intensive regimen of active self-reflection will help him make better decisions.

What resonated with me during my most recent reading was how the Jesuit order faced the daunting task of preserving their purpose in remote lands among peoples with unfamiliar traditions - the same challenge facing my organization. Lowney provides many examples of how the Jesuits succeeded at that task. The training that the novice Jesuit undergoes involves frank self-examination, the letting go of attachments (the concept of "indifference" or the freedom to choose any course of action unencumbered by ingrained habits and prejudices), while learning, through active and repeated self-reflection, to validate one's own instincts to action. This creates a confident, prepared and self-reliant individual, eager to embrace life's challenges. In addition, the Jesuits teach a methodology for self-reflection - the Spiritual Exercises and the Examen - that can be used (the Examen everyday) to reinforce their initial training. Their selection process is tough - they take only the best and most purposeful. Those who are selected are encouraged to innovate and shown how love adds passion and purpose to the pursuit of heroic ambitions. The result, says Lowney, is an organization that can adapt easily to radically different circumstances while preserving it's core values (the same "preserve the core, stimulate progress" that Built to Last author Jim Collins sees as the hallmark of companies of enduring greatness).

At times during my visit to our new overseas location I found myself wondering if our task was just too daunting, the culture just too alien, to hope to transplant our unique brand. After reading how the Jesuits managed it, I feel more confident than ever that my organization can do likewise and should do likewise - not shrinking from full-out engagement - through the innovative application of our fundamental values to this new environment. Thanks Chris, and Inigo, for the reinvigorating lesson!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. True Leadership As Seen Through The Eyes Of An Ex Jesuit Seminarian and JP Morgan Investment Banker
By Richard Cagney
This book presents a roadmap of leadership as seen through the eyes of a former Jesuit Seminarian and JP Morgan Investment Banker. Drawing upon his experience at both institutions, moreso the Jesuits, Chris Lowney details major tenets of leadership that should be the cornerstone of any organization. Weaved throughout this book are stories of how the Jesuits traveled throughout the world for over 500 years teaching their unique style of leadership. This is a must read for any College, University, or Business as true leadership philosophies are taught. I have sent this book to many CEO's and friends throughout the years and in all instances this book has gotten great reviews.

Leadership Principles for Lasting Success