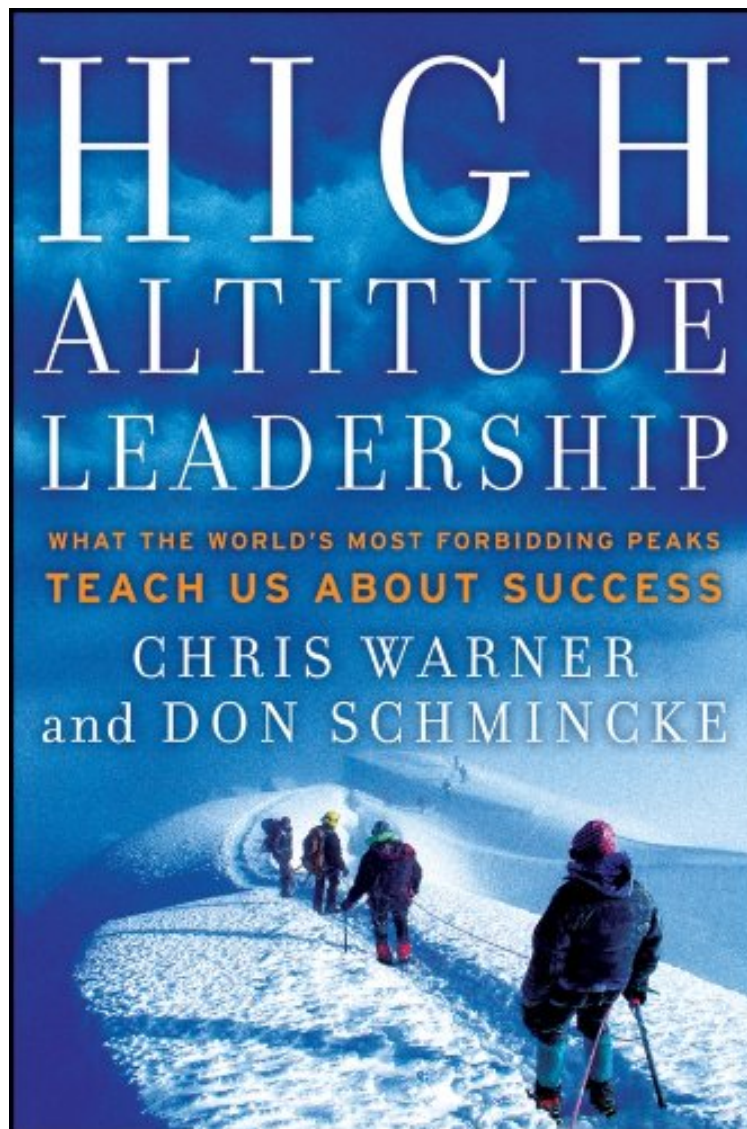


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High Altitude Leadership: What the World's Most Forbidding Peaks Teach Us About Success (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership)

Chris Warner, Don Schmincke

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Chris Warner, Don Schmincke : High Altitude Leadership: What the World's Most Forbidding Peaks Teach Us About Success (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised High Altitude Leadership: What the World's Most Forbidding Peaks Teach Us About Success (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. High Altitude LeadershipBy Gregory DavenportChris Warner's

theories go beyond pen and paper. His concepts erupted over time and during hardships where leadership was key to survivability. These hardships consist of over 150 international mountaineering expeditions to include reaching the summit of Mount Everest and K2 (Warner Schmincke, 2009). This is remarkable given that 1 in 50 climbers die attempting Everest and 1 in 4 on K2 and Warner is one of only nine American climbers to have summated both peaks (Warner Schmincke, 2009). In addition to personal conquests, Warner owns three indoor climbing gyms in the Washington D.C. region and provides leadership development seminars for the Wharton School of Business (Warner Schmincke, 2009). After over 25 years of adventure, Warner teamed up with Don Schmincke and published his leadership theories in a book called *High Altitude Leadership: Warner's Leadership and Organizational Theory*. Does summiting a mountain translate to leadership? According to Warner and Schmincke (2009) it does. Warner's theories revolve around eight dangers of high altitude adventure which include "fear of death, selfishness, tool seduction, arrogance, lone heroism, cowardice, comfort, and gravity" (Warner Schmincke, 2009, p. xxvi). It is hard to sum up a writer's theory in a short post but here is a quick attempt:

Fear of death. In corporate America, Warner and Schmincke (2009) believe fear creates "whispered conversations and accusatory emails" (p. 7) and leads to unmet goals, failed projects, lost sales, and even bankruptcy. A Successful high altitude leader, however, will recognize and embrace this fear and use it to promote innovation, decisiveness, and action.

Selfishness. Warner writes that selfishness leads to backstabbing, hidden agendas, withholding information, and passing the buck and results in employee turnover, poor morale, product quality erosion, and missed sales (Warner Schmincke, 2009). To counter this problem, high altitude leadership promotes goals similar those found in teams trying to summit a peak. For example, when individual and team goals are the same, it will drive performance, inspire value-based behavior, and provide strategic focus (Warner Schmincke, 2009).

Tool Selection. This portion of Warner and Schmincke's (2009) theory simply focuses on an individual's behavior, not his tools, as the crux that creates results. Although basic tools are needed, organizations don't require the newest trendy gimmick to create success.

Arrogance. Leaders with this trait fail to heed warnings and listen to others and in turn miss opportunities for growth. An arrogant leader is selfish and self-promoting. On the flip side, a humble leader has embraced failures and understands how the team impacts his success. Again, the same holds true of a team climbing a major peak such as Everest. One arrogant climber can lead to the team's failure.

Lone Heroism. Lone heroism refers to leaders who think they are the only person for the job. Warner and Schmincke's (2009) believe lone hero behavior leads to weakened teams, lost accountability, misaligned direction, and hero tenure which translates into "higher operating costs, lower innovation, increased risks, delayed execution, higher turnover, and missed sales opportunities" (p. 115). To counter this problem, Warner and Schmincke (2009) advocate a team approach where individual strengths are recognized and used in order for the team to reach the summit or goal.

Cowardice. Cowardice behavior is the opposite of lone heroism. Fear of reprisal often leads to this form of behavior which in turn can result in a communication disconnect between the various levels of the team. Warner and Schmincke (2009) caution organizations against excessive praise which they believe can lead to a narcissistic type behavior and fear of reprisal. Instead, they advocate open communication where both praise and shame are used. Warner and Schmincke (2009) believe shame is an appropriate tool that leads people to take bold action instead of cowering in their tent (aka cubicle).

Comfort. Comfort leads to lazy complacency, which often translates to business failure especially given the constant evolution of public demand and product delivery. In mountaineering terms, "When the avoidance of discomfort overcomes your leadership power, you can bet you'll give up summiting" (Warner Schmincke, 2009, p. 141). To overcome this obstacle, Warner and Schmincke (2009) focus on open honest communication (regardless of outlook), perseverance even when hitting the wall, and using natural leaders that embrace the company's mission.

Gravity. Gravity refers to unforeseen events that can create success, chip away profit, or completely destroy a business. Recognizing this obstacle is important, however, controlling it may not be possible.

Discussion Teamwork, communication, adaptation, and a common goal are the crux to Warner and Schmincke's (2009) High Altitude Leadership theory. When climbing Everest, the team's mission is clear and without teamwork and a common goal reaching the peak becomes impossible. In corporate America, however, employees often behave like members of an orchestra warming up. They work independent of one another, without a common goal, and create illogical noise. Warner and Schmincke's theory puts a conductor at the podium, transforming this unorganized group into a harmonious team where individual talents produce harmony while reaching a common goal.

The descriptive details related to High Altitude Leadership alone make the book a great read; the theories on how they apply to everyday life make this book a gem. I recommend this book without any hesitation.

References Warner, C., Schmincke, D. (2009). *High altitude leadership : what the world's most forbidding peaks teach us about success* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding read! By Karlene K. Pettit I loved this book. One page you will be on the mountain with Chris, and the next in the boardroom with Don, learning parallel skills needed to manage a business, or save your life. This book pulled together my favorite subjects of why we do what we do, and how we are the masters of our own lives, be it on a mountain or in business. You won't be disappointed.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. New Venue for Old Lessons By Paul R. Niven If you've been around the organizational world for a while there is nothing in this book that you haven't already heard a thousand times - perseverance, the danger of the status quo, courage, etc., etc. What's new is the venue for the lessons - mountaintops

around the globe. The authors use tales of mountaineering to weave in their 'high altitude' leadership skills. At first I found this very compelling, but by the end of the book I found myself skimming the stories which had all begun to sound alike: "From base camp we began the ascent....." Again, the lessons provided by the authors are certainly valid and unquestionably important, but they are timeless principles and you won't find anything new in this volume. I also found this book uncomfortably xenophobic at points. In virtually all of the tales from the world's tallest peaks you find Americans rescuing or shepherding people of other nationalities who have made poor and sometimes unethical decisions that endanger others. The 'non-Americans' are often cast in a very unfavorable light and while the stories are most likely true I don't think identifying the nationalities of the guilty serves to advance the book's core premise. I found it distracting.

Leadership is often a risky, lonely role possessing nearly unbearable lows and fleeting highs. Despite this emotionally and intellectually draining roller coaster, a handful of leaders deliver stunning results, with great consistency. They push past current leadership trends in order to achieve the most extremely challenging goals. They don't fall prey to the platitudes or clichés we see so often in leadership theory. Instead, they succeed by recognizing and surviving the dangers that challenge them as they take themselves and their teams to higher levels. These rare individuals are those that Chris Warner and Don Schmincke call High Altitude Leaders. In High Altitude Leadership they show how to become that kind of leader. The authors present a new approach to leadership development, based on ground-breaking scientific research, field-tested under the most brutal conditions on the most difficult summits, and successfully applied in the training of executives, management teams, and entrepreneurs throughout the world.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Warner is a mountaineer and entrepreneur (founder of mountaineering outfitter Earth Treks); Schmincke is an author (The Code of the Executive) and leadership consultant, though he's an MIT-trained scientist and engineer at heart. Having met on a charity climb in the Andes, they discovered similar opinions on human nature and management techniques, from which they developed the concept of "high altitude leadership." Warner and Schmincke identify eight psychological mindsets that paralyze organizations and individuals, undermining productivity: Fear, Selfishness, Tool Seduction, Arrogance, Lone Heroism, Cowardice, Comfort and Gravity. Each is discussed in its own chapter, beginning with an often tragic example from Warner's mountaineering life that shows pointedly how similar behavior can lead to workplace catastrophe. Schmincke prides himself on being a "mad scientist" rather than a management guru, focused on practical observation and common-sense application; he employs a deliciously sarcastic tone when discussing typical, ineffective managerial "magic cures" like Mission Statements and Codes of Values. The final chapter is devoted to caring, highlighting the importance of courage, moral code, efficacy, social responsibility, honor, patriotism, virtue, valor and sense of group identity. As much a life guide as a business primer, this book sports a helpful, engaging and positive plan for working together effectively and honestly. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Fear, selfishness and arrogance - these are just some of the dangers that can threaten a climber's life, and in the high-threat world of global commerce and global security, they can destroy a country's or organization's future. Peak performance is about digging deeper to overcome the barriers of our own making. As Chris and Don assert, we have to dig deeper in order to climb higher."--Ralph Heath, Executive Vice President, Aeronautics, Lockheed Martin Corporation "At last, something new has been written about leadership. The authors skillfully bridge the crosswalk between what is required of leaders in life and death situations scaling the world's highest peaks and the more mundane, but sometimes no less scary, halls of corporate America"--Cathy A. Trower, Ph.D. Research Director, Co-Principal Investigator Collaborative On Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Harvard University, Graduate School of Education. "Chris Warner is living proof that courage and intellect provide a powerful leadership combination. He and Don Schmincke serve as outstanding guides for exploring what it takes to lead an organization into difficult and uncharted terrain. If you're an executive who searches for the occasional inspirational gut-check, this book is a must for your shelf."--David Callahan, executive editor, SmartCEO Magazine

High Altitude Leadership Leadership is often a risky, lonely role possessing nearly unbearable lows and fleeting highs. Despite this emotionally and intellectually draining roller coaster, a handful of leaders deliver stunning results, with great consistency. They push past current leadership trends in order to achieve the most extremely challenging goals. They don't fall prey to the platitudes or clichés we see so often in leadership theory. Instead, they succeed by recognizing and surviving the dangers that challenge them as they take themselves and their teams to higher levels. These rare individuals are those that Chris Warner and Don Schmincke call High Altitude Leaders. In High Altitude Leadership they show how to become that kind of leader. The authors present a new approach to leadership development, based on ground-breaking scientific research, field-tested under the most brutal conditions on the most difficult summits, and successfully applied in the training of executives, management teams, and entrepreneurs throughout the world. To thrive in the face of today's business challenges and tomorrow's unpredictable risks, you need to become the type of leader whose career, team, and company excels in the most extreme environments. You have to be the High Altitude Leader who uses every bit of your talent and every

ounce of your strength to guide your team to peak performance. This book will show you how.