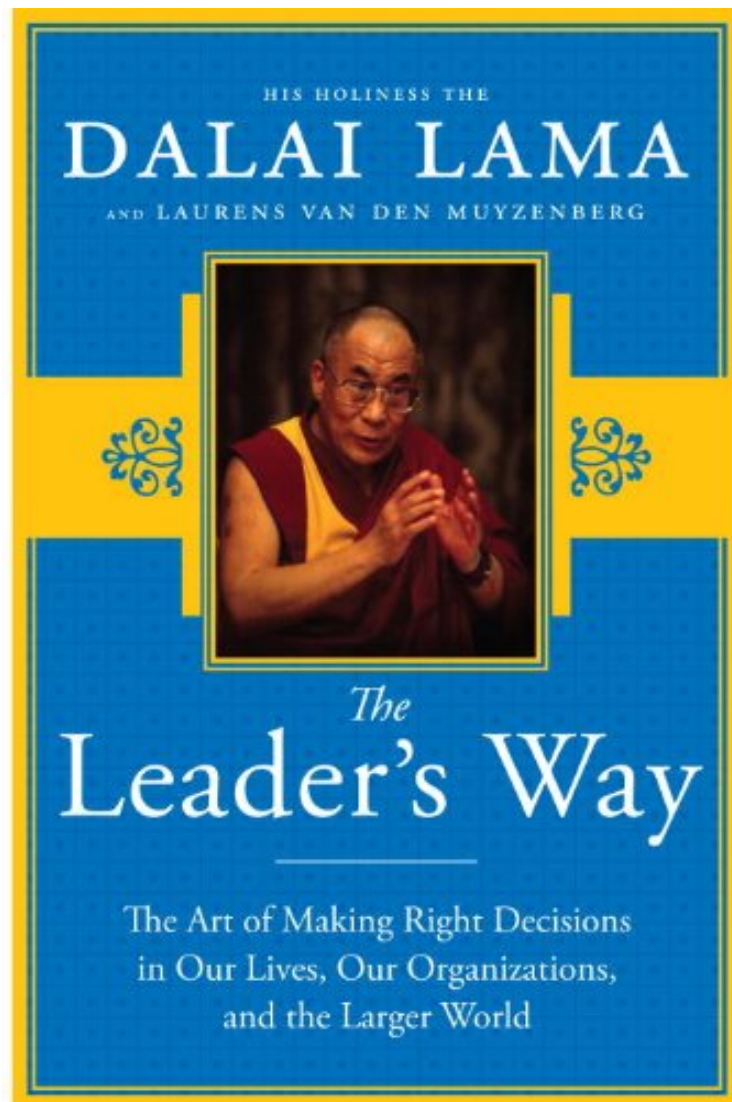


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The Leader's Way: The Art of Making the Right Decisions in Our Careers, Our Companies, and the World at Large

Laurens Van Den Muyzenberg

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Laurens Van Den Muyzenberg : The Leader's Way: The Art of Making the Right Decisions in Our Careers, Our Companies, and the World at Large before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Leader's Way: The Art of Making the Right Decisions in Our Careers, Our Companies, and the World at Large:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The author's discuss the application of some of Buddhism's tenets

into commerce, economics, and government. By Lord Erik The authors use simple straightforward language to discuss the value of Buddhist thinking for 21st century leadership. They share their thoughts on the increasing interdependence and globalization of economies and the potential of free-markets to improve lives for many in poverty. Each time, they introduce a Buddhist concept, explain its relevance to the reader, and illustrate successful application of the tenets with real-world anecdotes. The work meant much to me personally and I learned a lot about non-Western systematic thinking on management. I will list some of the discussions: 1) Leaders should use Right View and Right Conduct to ensure their activities benefit as many people as possible. 2) Profit is not only okay, it is required by Buddha. Leaders must learn to take care of themselves before they can help others. 3) If we are blessed with bounty from good business, we are obligated to help others improve their chances of happiness. 4) Proper free-market economies are the best chance those in poverty have for a better life. Communism/Socialism fail. 5) It is hard to start businesses in developing countries because of corruption and regulation. 6) We must remember that while the free-market is the best chance of improving the lives of others--we must always bear in mind the interdependence of our actions. These actions may hurt others, hurt the environment, and even hurt ourselves. There are some ideas I wish they went into more details, but as they point out, the book is not about Buddhism. They do not wish to convert others or herald Buddhist schools of thought, they only wanted to highlight its potential to improve leadership in business and government.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book for entrepreneur By Kas Foster Thank you very much for writing this book. I'm an entrepreneur myself. I found it interesting (in a little bit frustrating kind of way) that some of my friends and family believe that being the 'boss' means a lot of fun and very little work. Maybe there are such 'bosses' in the world who can do nothing and have the company run smoothly with no competition. But most company owners work VERY hard. While company employees worry about their jobs, 'bosses' worry about a lot of things that's vital to the company's survival too. This book speaks to us in a rare way - kind and sympathetic. The suggestions inside offer help to keep my mind calmer over my day to day work - which is a big pump to my efficiency. Highly recommend.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A hopeful message for leaders By V. Jean Ramsey This is a book that needs to be read slowly, and digested thoughtfully. It requires a shift in perspective - a mindful approach. And while the terms "right view" (taking a wise view) and "right conduct" (doing the right thing) may seem awkward to our Western ears, putting them into practice in organizations would improve the well-being of all of us involved in, and affected by, organizations. Having taught in business schools for well over 30 years - but on the "people" side of management, rather than the "financial" side - I especially appreciated the discussion about profit-making not being the sole purpose of business. Necessary, yes, but the Dalai Lama makes a strong case for the more appropriate goal of business being to meet the needs of their customers while acting responsibly - thus, assuring a healthy profit. It was also refreshing to see the call for leaders in both business and government to "take the initiative in addressing poverty, promoting environmental sustainability, protecting human rights and access to justice, making diversity a strength." (p. 191) This is an ongoing exhortation in the book and one that gives me great hope for a future of greater peace and prosperity across the world, even during these troubling times. Hopeful examples of companies making great strides in the areas of corporate responsibility, environmental sustainability, and the fight against poverty are described in detail. I can imagine this book being used very effectively in Business Ethics courses. I liked the way they alternated between the voices of the two authors. Each adds their own unique perspective, which reinforces and extends that of the other. The messages are very consistent and convincing.

V. Jean Ramsey Co-author of *Reframing Change: How to Deal with Workplace Dynamics, Influence Others, and Bring People Together to Initiate Positive Change*

Born out of a decade of discussion between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and international management consultant Laurens van den Muyzenberg, *The Leader's Way* is the unique meeting of two worlds: the global business landscape and Buddhism. At first sight, these seem to be an unlikely pairing. After a closer look, however, the best business practices and Buddhist principles in fact have much in common; both are concerned with making rational, holistic decisions and turning them into responsible, effective action. Indeed, the teachings of Buddhism have much to offer business leaders. The world today faces many unique challenges: the worst global recession in over seventy-five years, with millions out of jobs and entire economies in a tailspin; billions of people living in abject poverty; the imminent threat of an environmental meltdown. Even prosperous businesses and leaders feel insecure about the future. A new kind of leadership is needed—one that sees events as they really are and understands the interconnectedness, impermanence, and interdependence of individuals, companies, and the global economic system. Through fascinating insights and day-to-day examples, His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers practical tools and advice on how to lead in our twenty-first-century world. Drawing on the wise teachings of Buddhism, he says, we can become better, more informed leaders as individuals, achieve more progressive leadership in our organizations, and help address some of the world's most pressing problems. Moreover, we can improve the quality of life for all by promoting responsible, ethical, and profitable business practices. That is the leader's way. A rewarding, surprising view into the life and thoughts of one of the world's most inspiring leaders, *The Leader's Way* provides a powerful manifesto for leading change—in our lives, our organizations, and the wider world. From

the Hardcover edition.

About the Author HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA, TENZIN GYATSO, is one of the world's best-known spiritual and political leaders. He has led his people for over fifty years as the head of the government-in-exile and spiritual leader of Tibet. In recognition of his work for peace and his concern for global environmental problems, His Holiness was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. More recently, in 2007, he received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor in the United States, for his advocacy of human rights. LAURENS VAN DEN MUYZENBERG is an international management consultant who has lived and worked in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, the United States, Chile, Bahrain, India, and Japan. He speaks seven languages. His work focuses primarily on the improvement of corporate governance and management performance. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction His Holiness the Dalai Lama Generally, Buddhist monks are somewhat isolated from the rest of society, often secluded in peace while praying for the welfare of all sentient beings and for our planet. Although I am one such monk, I also have responsibilities with regard to the Tibetan government-in-exile, which offers me a broader perspective in that I interact with people from all over the world. In the course of my travels I have met many different kinds of people, some of them poor, some of them rich, each of them occupying their own position in the world. People appear to trust me; therefore many have talked to me about their lives, their hopes, and their concerns about the future. In the end, I have learned that what almost everyone is seeking is a measure of happiness. Why am I writing this book now? Because I feel we all should have a sincere concern and responsibility for how the global economy operates, and an interest in the role of businesses in shaping our interconnectedness. Times have changed, and I believe that leaders of religious traditions — with their ability to take a long view of the human condition — should participate in discussions of global business and economics. Our world faces very serious problems. Those that are of particular concern to me include the overwhelming degrees of poverty in poor countries; the fact that even in prosperous countries the sense of satisfaction with life has been stagnating since 1950; the negative impact that our negligence and our ever-increasing population and rising standard of living are having on the environment; and finally, the lack of peace in so many parts of the world. Because Buddhism takes a rational and logical attitude to such problems, its approach is sometimes easier to understand for those who are not religious than for those who are. In Buddhism, there is an emphasis on human values and on how we can be taught to take a holistic approach to solving society's problems. So if we view Buddhist teachings in terms of secular ethics and fundamental human values, then perhaps they too have something to contribute to the business world. Buddhist concepts about wealth, work, consumption, and happiness are somewhat different than their Western counterparts. Happiness is more than merely satisfying our material wishes and desires. The root of happiness is not in what we desire or what we get but somewhere altogether different. It stems from a place of inner contentment that exists no matter what we gain or achieve. Buddha recognized that self-oriented drives were very powerful. However, he came to the conclusion that the drive for satisfying the desires of the self was impossible to achieve, a never-ending cycle. People cannot be truly happy unless they have friendships and good relationships with other people. Furthermore, good relationships are reciprocal. It is impossible for people to build positive relationships with others if their only aim is to satisfy their own desires. So I believe that governments and organizations, which bring people into contact with one another, as well as create jobs and wealth, have a very important role to play in these questions of the standard of living and human happiness — and where the two may intersect. I do not pretend that the solutions to the world's problems are simple or straightforward. While working on this book, I have come to understand how difficult it can be for businesspeople to make the right decisions. When the leader of a company makes a decision, it affects all the employees and many others who buy its products or act as suppliers, and therefore the quality of business decisions is critical. This becomes especially complex for large, global corporations operating in many countries. For this reason, the decision maker must not only be competent, but must also have the right motivation and the right state of mind. Competence specific to business measures both talent and knowledge; as such, it is beyond the scope of this book. However, observing and correcting your motivation is an important aspect of Buddhist practice and is discussed in detail here, as is cultivating the right state of mind. Fundamental to Buddhist philosophy is the notion that suffering exists, and that the Buddha calls on all of us to help alleviate it. My aim in this book is the same: to enable readers and leaders to reduce suffering and increase satisfaction with life as a whole by helping them to understand more clearly what happens in their minds and the mind of others. As a consequence, this book will help leaders everywhere make good decisions that will generate a better quality of life for themselves, their organizations, and everyone else affected by those decisions. My own interest and thinking about business and economics has evolved over the last 50 years. My formal training has been of an entirely religious and spiritual character; since my youth, my field of study has been Buddhist philosophy and psychology. To some extent, due to my interaction with Tibetan and Chinese members of the Communist Party, I gradually learned about different economic systems. By inclination, I found I first leaned toward socialism, but as I watched the economies in socialist countries stagnate while the free-market economies grew clearly more dynamic, I became particularly interested in what had gone wrong with the socialist economies and in the positive aspects of the free

market (though I do remain concerned that the free-market system tends to increase the gap between the rich and the poor). In 1990, I received a letter from Laurens van den Muyzenberg, an international management consultant. He suggested that rather than seeking to combine the common themes of communism and Buddhist thinking, as I had earlier envisaged, it would be more effective to consider how capitalism could be improved in an attempt to address our collective concerns. I found the idea appealing and asked him to visit me; we met many times over the intervening years. Then in 1999, Laurens suggested that given the increasing interest in governance among global companies and the fact that the Buddhist tradition includes many theoretical and practical instructions that would be helpful to people in businesses, especially their leaders; I should be able to make a contribution to the literature on the subject. And thus, this book was born. We agreed at the outset that we wanted the book to be of practical use and to help businesspeople make better decisions. We decided that Laurens would describe the business issues and I would explain how to apply Buddhist teachings to the issues he raised. I advised Laurens to take a holistic approach. By "holistic" I meant that he should look at issues from many different perspectives, not solely that of a management consultant from the West. I believe one of the main problems in the world today is that, while the amount of information is growing exponentially, people are becoming more and more narrow in their world view and are no longer able to understand how all these ideas for improving society interact. In writing this book I have selected subjects that I think are important and Laurens has investigated them based on his own experience, discussion with professional colleagues, and research of published information. He also interviewed business leaders who were active Buddhist practitioners about the impact of Buddhism on their approach to business. We do not claim to have found all the answers, but we have taken pains to present Buddhist teachings in a useful way that businesspeople can easily understand. I am not interested in converting readers of this book to Buddhism. My interest is to present Buddhist concepts in a way that is useful to people from all religious faiths, and even to those without any specific religious faith. This book is not about Buddhism as a religion or as a way of life. I believe that people can find values to help them lead a good and responsible life in all religious traditions. I also believe that people who do not follow any religion can lead a good and responsible life. The ideas in this book are therefore possible for everyone to accept and practice. I have faced a great many difficulties in my life. I lost my freedom at the age of 16 and became a refugee at 24. Nevertheless, I can say that due to my Buddhist training, I am happier than many people who take freedom and a country they call their own for granted. This ability to maintain my peace of mind is entirely due to the teachings I have received and my consistent efforts to put them into practice by training my mind. My sincere hope is that with this book, I can help our leaders; in business and global organizations; learn and apply this same training to bring about a more peaceful and sustainable planet.