



# Developing Leadership: Questions Business Schools Don't Ask

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## What kind of a leader do you want to become?

The role of business schools in developing future managers and leaders has long been scrutinised and critiqued. This has been exacerbated by the recent financial crisis and many books have been written that condemn business schools for producing leaders who graduate without the ability to respond to the changing world around them, innovate, or act in a responsible way.

By way of remedy this provocative book takes the critique and debate further, proposing a number of ethical and spiritual resources including Heiggarian philosophy, classical Greek philosophy, and the Maori notion of wairua. It explores existing teaching practices and suggests ways that business schools can:

- Encourage a greater understanding of different world views
- Introduce different perspectives such as the arts, philosophy and spirituality
- Encourage the practice of responsible and ethical leadership
- Nurture innovation and creativity.

**Developing Leadership** is accompanied by filmed seminars exploring the central debates, and interviews with the expert team of contributors. The conversation continues at [www.ethicalleadership.org.uk](http://www.ethicalleadership.org.uk)

'A rare thing, this book gives more than the label promises. The title is about "questions", yet each chapter gives us answers to why important issues are not addressed in business schools – and what to do about it. This is a manifesto for reform, and the next big question is what will you, reader, do about it?' -

**Professor Jonathan Gosling, Director, Centre for Leadership Studies,  
University of Exeter, UK, and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Leadership  
Development, INSEAD, France**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

A rare thing, this book gives more than the label promises. The title is about 'questions', yet each chapter gives us answers to *why* important issues are not addressed in business schools - and what to do about it. This is a manifesto for reform, and the next big question is what will you, reader, do about it? (Jonathan Gosling)

Reading this book makes you think about leadership and, most of all, educating potential leaders! The book builds on an astonishing multiplicity of theoretical, philosophical and spiritual traditions, providing the reader with a critical understanding of leadership processes – including moral responsibilities and accountabilities.

(Jörg Sydow)

Exploring the intrinsic link between spirituality, ethics and business, is a critical step in ensuring the unified vision of individuals, institutions of society and the community, to achieve a harmonious and sustainable future. It is incumbent upon us all to become the '*agents of change*'.

(Soheil Abedian)

This is a very timely publication. Business school education needs a critical examination from people who inhabit that world and know what they're talking about. The presence and prominence of teleological, spiritual and ethical perspectives are especially welcome.

(Richard Higginson)

This collection of readings is an excellent antidote to what can be seen as the ignominy of our age – the relentless and unremitting proliferation of corporate scandals culminating but not ceasing with the 2008 global financial crisis. More specifically, it focuses on one of the travesties of the modern university – the incapacity of business schools to challenge the myopic economic instrumental values of business. By raising problems and possible solutions to questions that business schools rarely ask, it facilitates a debate that could help to challenge the inadvertent complicity of higher education to sustain and reproduce an unenlightened individualistic self seeking managerial cadre. It provides an illuminating insight into current business school and business practices and their failures to provide a more enlightened ethical leadership that would benefit both students and practitioners of business as well as society more generally.

(David Knights)

This book is a badly needed, but underestimated - and perhaps unwanted? - wake-up call for main stream business schools, which are providing smooth, normative, maple syrup flavoured managerialist answers to important, current and future leadership challenges. The book will help academics, students and practitioners

to get out of the inner paradigmatic prison, where answers are provided, before the questions are raised, where socially desirable rhetoric shade for critical questioning, and where "what's in it for me?" repress important societal, ethical considerations.

(Henrik Holt Larsen)

We live in interesting times. Wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a very small elite, while the dispossessed are complicit because they have made money their god. We are racing towards cataclysmic collapse, as infinite growth is not possible when we live on a finite planet. Within this aberration Business Schools have become the servants of corporate power. Thinking is seen as dangerous because it threatens power, and ethics is equally subversive within materialistic consumerism. Without challenging the idea of business this book asserts that universities at least ought to be asking questions. However speaking truth to power is not easy when universities themselves have become just another corporate business. This book is vast and complex in its scholarship, with something for everyone. Enjoy and be challenged.

(Tony Watkins)

‘The authors have undertaken a courageous exploration of the ills that never seem to go away in the capitalist model. Courageous because the authors examine their own roles in perpetuating those ills. It is an important book which I hope the leaders of business schools and leaders of business will read.‘

(Vincent Neate)

‘This book is music to my ears. There has long been a desperate need to be critically reflexive about the paradigm of leadership and management promoted by business schools, and I delight in the fact that this collection of narratives aims to pick the lock of this 21<sup>st</sup> century psychic prison. This is a long overdue and must-read book.’

(Patrick Goh)

Finally! For too long the role of business education, and the MBA as its global flagship, has remained shockingly unquestioned in today’s crisis of enterprise and economics. This book has to be highly commended for its collaborative, crosscultural courage, reviewing and renewing not only the underlying assumptions of business and business education, but also for tapping deeply into an impressive variety of philosophical, ethical, cultural and spiritual resources of humanity as vital ingredients for a much needed transformation of an entire discipline and practice. *Developing Leadership*’s main merit is to be a well-composed, deeply substantiated and profoundly challenging “door opener” to a crucial debate – to be held across borders, cultures, disciplines and institutions. It is an example and urgent invitation for co-engagement between management educators, business students and practitioners alike. Congratulations!

(Alexander Schieffer)

The 20 essays, along with their end-of-section commentaries, uniquely challenge the traditional paradigmatic curriculum; they also provide from an insider’s viewpoint profound debate of the status quo and eclectic alternative pedagogies that complement and integrate ethics and moral authority as important attributes of business and leadership education. An important addition to all leadership collections. Highly recommended. (S. R. Kahn, University of Cincinnati)

## About the Author

**Chris Mabey** is a Chartered Psychologist and Professor in Leadership at Middlesex University Business School. Chris has held a career-long interest in leadership development as a counsellor for a charity, as a practitioner with British Telecom and Rank Xerox and as a consultant. More recently he has researched, taught and written on this topic with four different business schools.

**Wolfgang Mayrhofer** is Full Professor and head of the Interdisciplinary Institute of Management and Organisational Behaviour, WU Vienna, Austria. He conducts research in comparative international human resource management, work careers, and systems theory and management.

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**Todd Lyons:**

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