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Gandee Vasan/Getty Images Attempts to analyze leadership tend to fail because the would-be analyst misconceives his task. He usually does not study leadership at all. Instead he studies popularity, power, showmanship, or wisdom in long-range planning. Some leaders have these things, but they are not of the essence of leadership. Peter Dazeley/Getty Images Growing up, I thought successful leaders were supposed to figure out all the answers on their own. Being smart — and making sure everyone else knew it — seemed to be their most striking attribute. The best schools were supposed to lead to the best jobs, which produced the best leaders. Power, fame, glory, and money were the measure of professional success. Early in my career, prominent business leaders like GE's Jack Welch were revered for their intellect, strategic sense, and hard-charging style. They were considered infallible geniuses, inspiring a quasi-cult following. Page 2 (No reviews yet) Write a Review MSRP: Was: Now: \$11.95 (USD) Quantity price applied Format information (No reviews yet) Write a Review Item: #H06YSB-PDF-ENG Publication Date: April 06, 2022 Publication Date: April 06, 2022 Understanding why you're in the room is more important than being the smartest one in it. Related Topics: Summaries and excerpts of the latest books, special offers, and more from Harvard Business Review Press. Loading shopping cart, please wait... Post Post Share Annotate Save Print Humble leadership is more than a personal virtue; it helps foster teamwork, build trust, and enhance employee well-being. It's also an effective way to unlock employees' leadership potential. By redefining humility as a strength, you can inspire your employees to grow, innovate, and lead. Here's where to start. Source: This tip is adapted from "Research: Humble Leaders Inspire Others to Step Up," by Xiaoshuang Lin and Herman Tse. Nikada/Getty Images When Alex walked into my office and said she was overwhelmed, I thought: OK, she needs my help. She needs answers. I listened, asked a few clarifying questions, and then did what I've been trained to do—fix it. I grabbed a pen, broke the problem into parts, and offered strategies: delegating more, calendar blocking, prioritization. I could see she was struggling, and I wanted to be useful. When Ajay Banga took over as CEO of Mastercard, in 2010, he knew that disruption of the payments industry was imminent. But rather than compete for market share within the 15% of global payments that were already electronic, he decided to focus the company's growth on the 85% that were still made by cash and check transactions. For him, the financial inclusion of individuals and small businesses that lacked access to the formal financial system became both a business imperative and a societal responsibility. It called for new mindsets and behaviors around talent, clients, the market, technology, and government. Latest In these turbulent times learning how to manage disputes is a must. Save Share From the July–August 2025 Issue The HBR Interview with Andy Jassy Save Share From the July–August 2025 Issue Jacinda Ardern, the former prime minister of New Zealand, on crisis leadership. Save Share From the July–August 2025 Issue How to inspire action using behavioral nudges, public commitments, and incentives. The best managers strike a balance between urgency and patience. GenAI capabilities are improving exponentially every six months or so, and yet most companies are adopting models at a linear pace, at best. Three experts on the qualities they find essential for navigating tough decisions. A recent study found that starting a new CEO at the beginning of the calendar year—or the fiscal year—led to better performance. Four tips for being more strategic with your time. Concrete steps to become better at seeing your team—and helping them do their best work. The HBR Executive Playbook on when and how to share negative updates with your directors. Get the help you need without overstepping. Strategies to subvert, counter, or sidestep assumptions and biases that may pose barriers to advancement. Eye contact, body language, and inner stillness can be the key to making overwhelmed employees feel supported. Page 2 (No reviews yet) Write a Review MSRP: Was: Now: \$11.95 (USD) Quantity price applied Format information (No reviews yet) Write a Review Item: #H08ECR-PDF-ENG Publication Date: October 18, 2024 Publication Date: October 18, 2024 Expert advice on what every leader needs to know. Related Topics: Summaries and excerpts of the latest books, special offers, and more from Harvard Business Review Press. Loading shopping cart, please wait... Carol Yepes/Getty Images Much has been written about common leadership styles and how to identify the right style for you, whether it's transactional or transformational, bureaucratic or laissez-faire. But according to Daniel Goleman, a psychologist best known for his work on emotional intelligence, "Being a great leader means recognizing that different circumstances may call for different approaches." Page 2 (No reviews yet) Write a Review MSRP: Was: Now: \$11.95 (USD) Quantity price applied Format information (No reviews yet) Write a Review Item: #H085MC-PDF-ENG Publication Date: April 09, 2024 Publication Date: April 09, 2024 Being a great leader means recognizing that different circumstances call for different approaches. Related Topics: Summaries and excerpts of the latest books, special offers, and more from Harvard Business Review Press. Loading shopping cart, please wait... Thomas Barwick/Getty Images In their new book, Leading Through: Activating the Soul, Heart, and Mind of Leadership (Harvard Business Review Press), former dean of Harvard Business School Kim Clark, his son, Jonathan, a professor of management at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and his daughter, Erin, a management consultant, call for the end of a power-focused leadership model and introduce a new approach: the "leading through" paradigm. This new leadership model consciously seeks to do good and to make things better; cares for people, helping them to thrive; and mobilizes people to solve tough problems. These three elements, they argue, are the soul, heart, and mind of leadership — and activating them requires careful attention to both the personal and the organizational dimensions of leadership. The following is a lightly edited excerpt from their book. 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