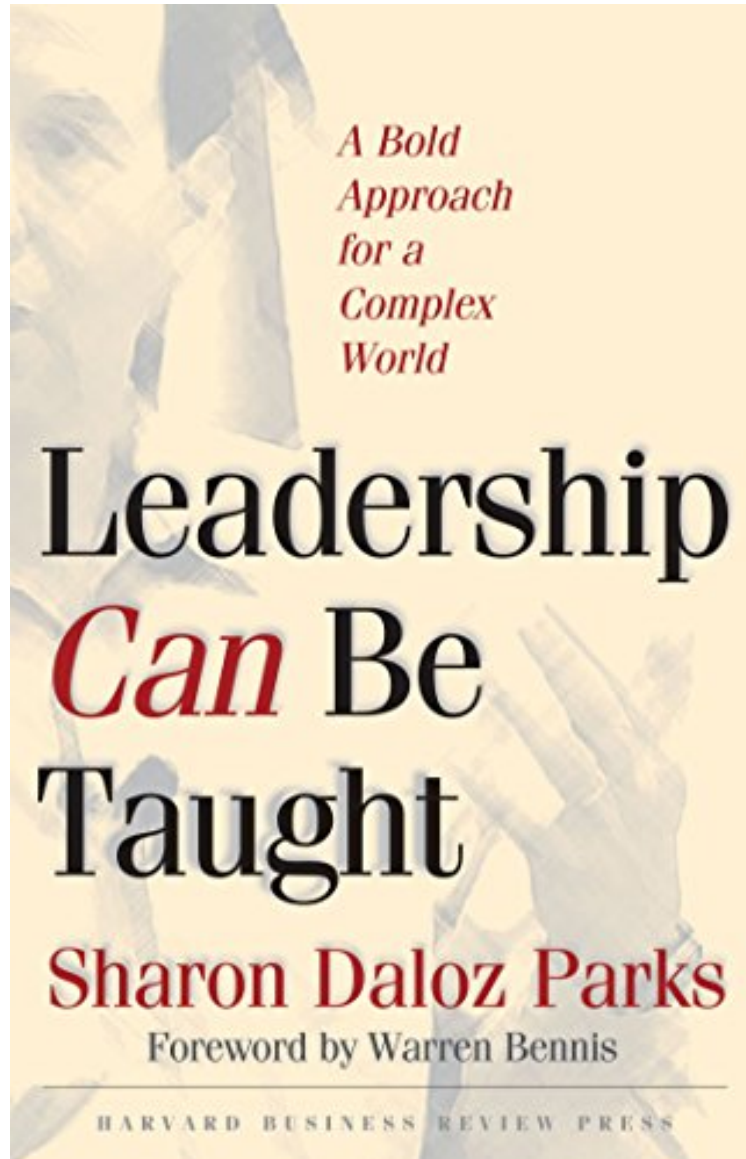


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Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World

Sharon Daloz Parks

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Sharon Daloz Parks : Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Leadership is about empowermentBy Daniel ImParks' Leadership Can Be Taught is an examination and illumination of Ronald Heifetz's teaching method at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She not only gives the reader an in depth experience of being in Heifetz's classroom, but she also translates his methodology into transferrable principles for leadership and teaching. She does this by dissecting the

case-in-point approach that Heifetz uses. She also dismantles the notion that an individual is born a leader, and plots a way to develop presence - "the ability to intervene, to hold steady, inspire a group, and work in both verbal and nonverbal realms" (13). In the second half of the book, Parks addresses the transferability of this approach to a variety of different situations, such as the workplace or different classroom settings. She then places herself in the shoes of a teacher, and examines the principles that teachers need to learn in order to teach with this methodology. The book closes with a critique on our culture's myth of leadership and an evaluation of this method's strengths and limits. In a sense, *Leadership Can Be Taught* is a hybrid-workbook or pathway to help leaders, teachers, and organizations rethink leadership, teaching, and how to learn. Parks presents an integrative framework where the theory of leadership and practice of teaching are woven together seamlessly (231). Through this new methodology, the traditional roles of teachers are reimaged, and students now have a different approach to learning. Leadership is less about an individual's talent and exercise of power, and more about empowering a group of individuals to work through, and learn from, their toughest issues. In this new model, "the teacher is a co-learner and at the same time a model, practicing authority and leadership in public so that others may eavesdrop, watch, contend with, and learn" (232). Consequently, this book has expanded my understanding of teaching and leadership. Not only will I cease to run away from conflict, but I will prayerfully and carefully examine where I need to start conflict in my ministry, in order to bring about beneficial change and learning. In the training seminars I lead, I am now going to strive to use the case-in-point method, and learn how much more beneficial this could be, than the simple case-study method.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A genuine book on Leadership. By Mowgli This is a great book and an eloquent deep-reading and much needed reframing of 'Leadership'. This is exceedingly better than the vast majority of books on leadership out there and I would highly recommend it for any educator as its as much about pedagogy as it is about the subject of leadership. There are two reasons I held off from giving it full stars. The first is that while its very insightful with lots of really beautiful ideas I had trouble determining its objectivity as it adopts a slightly 'cultish' tone around this specific approach of adaptive leadership. The second is that I felt the book could have been stronger if was 60-70% its current length as many of the ideas are repeated without much nuance. Perhaps my two points are also related. Having said that its still very much worth the investment and I have recommended it to others.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A "must-read" By KGS Fabulous book describing Heifetz's work with adaptive leadership. A "must-read" for those interested in this approach to leadership development.

If leaders are made, not born, what is the best way to teach the skills they need to be effective? Today's complex times require a new kind of leadership--one that encompasses a mind-set and capabilities that can't necessarily be taught by conventional methods. In this unique leadership book, Sharon Daloz Parks invites readers to step into the classroom of Harvard leadership virtuoso Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues to understand this dynamic type of leadership and experience a corresponding mode of learning called "case in point." Unlike traditional teaching approaches that analyze the experiences of past leaders, case in point uses individuals' own experiences--and the classroom environment itself--as a crucible for learning. This bold approach enables emerging leaders to work actively through the complex demands of today's workplace and build their skills as they discover theory in practice. Through an engaging, you-are-there writing style, Parks outlines essential features of this approach that can be applied across a range of settings. In the process, *Leadership Can Be Taught* reveals how we can learn, practice, and teach the art of leadership in more skilled, effective, and inspired forms. Sharon Daloz Parks is director of leadership for the New Commons--an initiative of the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, WA. She has held faculty and research positions at the Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Business School, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

.com Readers seeking an atypical business book may like *Leadership Can Be Taught*. Its author, Sharon Daloz Parks, has a conventional enough background: She's taught at various Harvard graduate schools, including its Divinity School, the Business School, and the School of Government--the book itself comes from Harvard Business School Press--and she now heads a leadership institute in Washington state, just outside Seattle. Parks' approach to leadership development, though, springs from a decidedly non-traditional philosophy. Unlike others who lionize strong leaders and decisive, authoritative personalities, Parks looks for her leadership lessons to Ronald Heifetz, a humble, almost meek instructor at Harvard. The book opens with a transcript of Heifetz's typical class at Harvard, and illustrates his free-flowing banter with students. There's something of a biblical, storybook-like quality to this narrative, as it shows Heifetz's Socratic style in drawing out students and leading them to truths. Heifetz's approach carries over to the book, which has an indirect, oblique style, and shuns the reductionist, simplifying, bullet-point orientation of most business books. Through the course of the book's nearly 300 pages, Parks argues that leadership is less magical and yet more important than we usually believe. Drawing on Heifetz's ideas, she explains her belief that leaders are formed gradually, over time and through deliberate effort--not born with special traits. Four key themes run through the book: first, that true leadership differs from the kind of formal authority typically conferred by organizations; second, that leaders have less of a role solving technical problems than in helping teams of individuals deal with adaptive challenges; third, that conventional power--meaning authority over people and budget--is less important than

"presence"; and fourth, that this mysterious quality of "presence" rests less on innate personality than on a style of interacting with others in an organization. Parks' concept of presence becomes a key axis on which the book turns. It's an intriguing concept. As she defines it, presence is "the ability to hold steady and to improvise in the midst of the conflict and tumult of adaptive work depends on cultivating an inner consciousness of the connectivity of which one is a part--especially when there is a high degree of voltage on the wires. It requires the ability to recognize and intelligently manage strong feelings--one's own emotions and the motions in othershellip;.It requires an understanding of one's self in relationship to audience, the ability to pay close attention, to listen, to feel, and to bring one's own heart-mind into the presenthellip;" Not all of this book rests on such dense academic language. Much of the writing describes anecdotes of students' interactions with Heifetz, as they learn his (and Parks') concept of leadership. Still, this is a challenging work, and not one that all readers will enjoy. Those who enjoy new paradigms of leadership, such as those advanced in Resonant Leadership or The Leadership Wheel, will be best suited for the unusual ideas, and style, of this book. --Peter Han

About the Author Sharon Daloz Parks is Director of Leadership for the New Commons--an initiative of the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, WA. She has held faculty and research positions at the Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Business School and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.