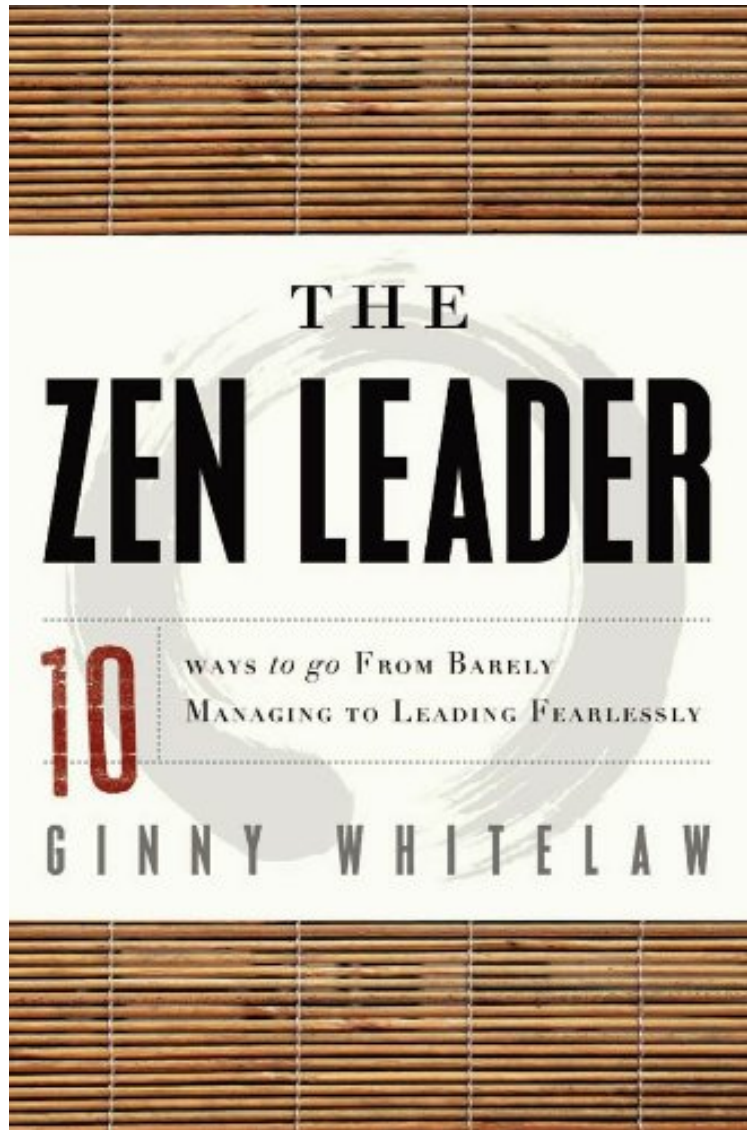


[Download pdf] The Zen Leader: 10 Ways to Go From Barely Managing to Leading Fearlessly

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Ginny Whitelaw

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Ginny Whitelaw : The Zen Leader: 10 Ways to Go From Barely Managing to Leading Fearlessly before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Zen Leader: 10 Ways to Go From Barely Managing to Leading Fearlessly:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Really Good! By E. Hubbard I found the "The Zen Leader" to be a wonderful book. It provides good, practical guidance on how to maximize both your business and "life" performance, whether you are a junior employee, a mid-level manager, or the leader of an organization. The real

strength of Dr. Whitelaw's book is the prescription it provides for reframing our perceptions in a way that can help us access greater effectiveness and satisfaction. "The Zen Leader" describes ten "flips" - or changes in perspective - that help us see the "Big Picture" and your role in that picture. Dr. Whitelaw grounds these flips in Zen, but she addresses them in a straightforward way geared towards a business audience. The ten flips can be enormously helpful. By way of analogy, imagine that you are stuck in a battle and confronted with serious threats, opportunities for victory, and a slew of incoming tasks. We have all been in such situations and sometimes it is easy to feel that the best that we can do is to cope. But imagine you have the chance to jump in a helicopter that rises above the battleground and hovers from where you can survey everything: the terrain, the various players, apparent strengths and weaknesses of your position, and even you! How valuable would this perspective be? Wouldn't it be an advantage in helping you determine how best to move forward? Whitelaw's book provides advice on how to achieve just this type of "big picture" so that you can know yourself and the people and world with which you interact, and determine the best path to travel. Along with the ten "flips", the book covers four basic energy patterns or individual styles of activity: "Driver", "Organizer", "Collaborator", and "Visionary". According to Whitelaw, each of us has access to all four patterns, but we typically prefer to operate using one or two home patterns (I'm a solid "Organizer/Driver"). The book provides excellent exercises and suggestions for recognizing our preferred patterns, understanding the strengths and limitations of each pattern, and accessing under-utilized, or less preferred, patterns. Whitelaw makes the case that over-reliance on our preferred patterns can undermine our managerial effectiveness and she uses the example of a manager she has coached who is relentless in achieving tasks, the hallmark of the "Driver". Whitelaw shows in this particular example that without accessing other patterns, particularly the Collaborator and Visionary, the manager risks burning out his colleagues, breeding dissatisfaction, and pursuing tasks that fail to help achieve strategic objectives. A real strength of the book is the use of many such real world examples culled by Dr. Whitelaw from her consulting practice. I thought this book was refreshing in the way it shows you how to "undo" your habitual ways of looking at life and, in the process, to achieve truly important goals. But - and this is a big "but" - what you get from the book depends upon your openness to new ideas (Whitelaw offers an unique perspective you will not find in other management or "self help" books) and a willingness to try some or all of the practical exercises and suggestions that are offered. Highly recommended.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Rather than give up or give in, how to break free from self-inflicted limits and "flip to the next stage" By Robert Morris

Two months before Ernest Becker's *Denial of Death* was published in 1974, he died of cancer at age 49. The core concept in his book is that no one can deny physical death. Only the suicide can control when. However, there is another form of death than [begin italics] can [end italics] be denied: That which occurs when we become wholly preoccupied with fulfilling others' expectations of us. I thought of that as I read Ginny Whitelaw's Introduction to *The Zen Leader* in which she urges her reader -- under intense and severe pressure by others to perform "leaner, smarter, faster, cheaper" -- not give up or give in. Use the pressure rather than be used by it to "propel breakthrough development and leaps to new consciousness, to "give way" to a "radical" reframing and inversion -- a "flip that takes many forms." For example, transitions such as these: from coping with constant pressure from outside-in to "diving right in and transforming situations from inside-out"; from exhausting oneself and others from the relentless drive for results to "attracting the future and people who help create it; and from [begin italics] being [end italics] one's personality to [begin italics] seeing [end italics] one's personality "and applying the right kind of energy to any situation." Whitelaw provides ten "Zen Leader Flip" mini-tutorials to help her reader to "break free and flip to the next stage of personal development. More specifically, to complete transitions from...

1. Coping Transforming (Pages 32-35)
2. Tension Extension (47-51)
3. Or And (72-75)
4. "Out here" "In Here" (91-97)
5. Playing to Your Strengths Strengthening Your Play (125-129)
6. Controlling Connecting (141-146)
7. From Driving Results Attracting the Future (171-179)
8. "It's All About Me" "I'm All About It"
9. Local Self Whole Self (228-232)
10. Delusion Awakening (250-253)

Following each of the ten "Zen Leader Flip" mini-tutorials, Whitelaw thoughtfully provides a "Takeaways" section listing key points and five tips for converting problems to opportunities. This material will facilitate, indeed expedite frequent review of essentials later. Make no mistake about how immensely complicated and deeply profound this process is. That is why Whitelaw provides a wealth of information, insights, and wisdom that, she fervently hopes, will help leaders and those aspiring to leaders to complete a transformation from "barely managing" to "leading fearlessly." Here are a few of the dozens of passages that caught my eye:

- o The challenges of transformation (Pages 29-32)
- o Why tension produces movement -- until it doesn't (41-43)
- o The Zen Leader/Core Practices: "Centering Mini-Break" (54-55), "Sitting Meditation" (101-102), "Invitation to Samadhi" (153-157), and "All Patterns at Once" (183-184)
- o Why "healthy tension" [begin italics] is [end italics] the point (65-68)
- o "A World of Our Making" (81-84)
- o "The Illusion of Control" (136-138)
- o "It's Always About Fear" (242-243)

No brief commentary such as this one could possibly do full justice to the scope and depth of material that Ginny Whitelaw provides in abundance. It remains for each reader to read the book with care and consideration. Also, it would be a fool's errand to attempt to apply immediately everything learned while reading the book. Rather, "give way" to whatever touches the heart as well as stimulates the mind. Meanwhile, keep in mind that development of Zen leadership is an on-going process rather than a specific destination. Finally, when considering or now embarked on that journey of personal development, keep in mind Oscar Wilde's suggestion: "Be yourself."

Everyone else is taken."0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Constant Companion and Primer for Life and LeadershipBy Anne MillerI was familiar with Ginny's work from her book on Move to Greatness that I also found so relevant and useful. This book takes things even deeper. Someone once pointed out to me that we are not really like human beings but rather like human doings. This book makes this distinction so clear to those of us who use mostly any of the four energies. Then in reading the book, we learn to listen with our whole bodies and that this is the most powerful part of any conversation or relationship to others and to life. One of the key insights for me is to demonstrate responsibility for who I am by looking at all of life as my choice and seeking to learn as if it were. In all the flips I am reminded how I fall into grooves in how things are interpreted that drive action and how I relate or connect or not. Being reminded that these grooves are only one way and perhaps not the best way - and then given exercises and things to do that help build the flip muscles makes this book extraordinary. Most leadership books talk about leadership and with this one, you can actually practice being a better leader and a better person in all that any of us engage in with business and with life.

"This book is an incredible journey through soul-searching ideas, [providing] a laser-focus on critical leadership issues, and practical exercises that embed the understanding and ability to make the flip at our very core. Fascinating!"--Virginia McLaughlin, Oliver Wyman Leadership DevelopmentLeaders today face nearly impossible tasks. Forced to do more with less, expand globally, innovate quickly, inspire broadly and--oh, yes--balance work and family. How can one manage all this pressure?The Zen Leader does not encourage you to just "be peaceful." Neither does it suggest you work harder, faster, or ignore the pressure. Quite the opposite: it's about using the pressure to propel "flips" in consciousness that create transformational leaders, leaders who create the future with joy and enthusiasm, rather than drive themselves and their people to exhaustion.The Zen Leader guides you through 10 "flips" that take you from barely managing to mastering change--not by doing more, zoning out, or pretending you have all the answers. Chapter by chapter, you'll learn how to make the "flips" that reframe your life, your leadership, and your world. Discover how you can get out of your own way and realize The Zen Leader in you.

About the AuthorDr. Ginny Whitelaw is both a leadership expert and a roshi (Zen master) in the Chozen-ji line of Rinzai Zen. Cofounder of Focus Leadership, she has taught and coached in countless programs to Global 1000 leaders, in part through her affiliation with Oliver Wyman Leadership Development and Columbia University's Senior Executive Program. Formerly Deputy Manager for integrating NASA's Space Station Program, she has a PhD in biophysics as well as a 5th degree black belt in Aikido.