

Radical Humility: Be a Badass Leader and a Good Human

Urs Koenig

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The inspiring leadership guidebook Radical Humility is about becoming a more caring, humane leader.

Challenging conventional wisdom, UN and NATO peacekeeper Urs Koenig's motivational business guidebook *Radical Humility* is about being a great leader and person by adopting a humble, team-oriented style.

Recommending an empathetic approach to leadership, this is a book about internal shifts. It encourages growing from blind spots toward self-awareness, from micromanaging toward team empowerment, and from secrecy toward open doors. From its perspective, even results-oriented managers can be tender with their people.

The book is organized by theme, with broad sections including "Lead Like a Compass" and "Champion a Fearless Culture" setting its course. Chapters drill down on more particular subjects like "Give a Damn about Others," "Building a Leadership Factory," and "Have Your People Rock the Boat" that progress in a way that develops and builds on the central premise. All of the work is backed by authoritative references to sources including the *Harvard Business Review* and the *New York Times*.

The book blends its extensive research with illuminating personal anecdotes, sharing what Koenig learned while "going out into the gray skies of Glogovac" in Kosovo, racing at the Winter World University Games, or dropping a flak jacket before deploying on a peacekeeping mission. The book also cites insights gleaned from leaders in sports, the military, the government, and business. Its recent examples include the Iraq War and the war in Ukraine. From each story, it draws forth practical tools, as for building trust and being vulnerable, that can be applied in any sector. It deploys lists to great effect, for instance spelling out "Three Myths and Two Surprising Truths about Humility and Leadership" to make its lessons digestible.

Koenig's tone is candid throughout. He warns of the risks of shifting to full transparency (feedback, he notes, might make people more closed off), establishing the book's own trustworthiness by not glossing over the potential side effects of applying its guidance. And he warns of pitfalls like self-doubt and internalizing others' views to the point of becoming unproductive. Also useful are the book's deconstructions of common misconceptions, like that humility is tantamount to weakness or a lack of confidence, and its anticipation of counterarguments, such as that many high-profile tech CEOs are not humble, with examples of how the same companies might have been more successful with humbler leadership styles.

Unafraid to challenge old-school practices, the leadership guidebook *Radical Humility* is about becoming a more caring, humane leader, evangelizing for a new approach in an evolving world.

JOSEPH S. PETE (December 18, 2023)

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