

The Mindset of Success: From Good Management to Great Leadership

Jo Owen

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The Mindset of Success: From Good Management to Great Leadership by Jo Owen is a guide for leaders of all kinds, based on the author's years of worldwide leadership research. He studied thirty-three highly effective leaders to determine what sets them apart from more run-of-the-mill managers. Contrary to popular belief in leadership spheres, it's not skills or behaviors that set these leaders apart; rather, it's the way they think. Owen details seven easy-to-grasp but deeply transformative mindsets—from high aspirations and courage to accountability and collaboration.

Each chapter explains what the mindset looks like in daily life and focuses on ways to adopt it in any situation. The final chapter delves into common misconceptions about the mindsets, such as how positive thinking can lead to denial and how aiming for collaboration can turn into aiming for popularity.

The approach is deceptively simple—some may think, “Great, I already do all those things”—but Owen cuts through the hype and arrogance that keep people convinced they're already doing what they need to succeed, thereby limiting their full potential. Some concepts may feel trite (like fulfilling your true potential), but Owen's research and concise, practical instruction pushes past platitudes. His problem/solution focus is full of positivity, but it contains zero fluff in terms of content or feel-goodery. He pushes leaders to be honest with themselves.

The greatest asset of Owen's book is that it can work for anyone. His examples run the gamut from corporations and nonprofits to governments and educators. While behavior-centric books tend to fit specific personalities and industries, Owen's strategies are fully inclusive, focusing instead on mental change. The book is not elitist, smug, or condescending; Owen gives the sense that he wants everyone to succeed, and that there's room for everyone to lead effectively.

This book is a great fit for those feeling stuck in their careers or who want to take themselves personally and professionally to the next level. It's applicable to those who already have some strong leadership qualities, as well as to those who've never really thought of themselves as leaders.

The short chapters, bulleted lists, and helpful tables and sidebars make this easy for busy professionals to digest. Owen balances the pace of research and application effectively, giving pause where needed and encouraging application at the right time.

The Mindset of Success invites everyone to grow in their leadership ability.

MELISSA WUSKE (May 6, 2015)

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