

The Way of the Shepherd

The search for effective and accessible leadership analogies is seemingly unending. Demonstrations of drawings, Venn diagrams, pyramids, and even funny cartoons provide ways for us to gather more understanding of the role leaders play. The Way of the Shepherd presents well some of the realities of leading others, and casts the leader in the role of shepherd and followers as the flock of sheep the shepherd cares for.

This analogy could seem offensive to some, after all who wants to be cast in the role of a sheep? Usually when people are referred to as sheep the intent is to draw them in the light of mindless followers, too unintelligent to fend for themselves. But bear with this analogy for a while longer because the picture here isn't about mindless sheep, it's about leaders who provide the best possible chance of development for those they lead, and in turn facilitate the best results for the organizations they lead.

The whole analogy is predicated on leaders that facilitate those they lead and provide the best opportunities for development and success.

Each chapter of this fable-based book communicates a practical element of leadership. Used in context and followed, these principles will not only help build confidence, and trust between leaders and the people they lead, these principles will also contribute the overall success of the organization. If you want to lead people into success and help your organization flourish, study these concepts and apply them. Be careful not to underestimate the potency of the concepts presented here; you might be tempted to dismiss this as a little quaint, but don't! The depth of this book is a little deceptive, but the benefits of applying it will be tangible.

Seven chapters present great content:

1. **Know the condition of your flock**
 - a. Know your people; understand them and what they need
2. **Discover the SHAPE of your sheep**
 - a. SHAPE
 - i. Strengths
 - ii. Heart
 - iii. Attitude
 - iv. Personality
 - v. Experiences
3. **Help your sheep identify with you**
 - a. Build trust
 - b. Set performance standards
 - c. Communicate vision
4. **Make your pasture a safe place**
 - a. Keep people informed and valued
5. **The staff of direction**
 - a. Be out in front and lead
 - b. Use persuasion rather than coercion
6. **The rod of correction**
 - a. Sometimes tough situations need to be dealt with and it hurts
 - b. Protect: Correct: Inspect
7. **The heart of the shepherd**
 - a. Great leadership is a lifestyle not a technique
 - b. Have a heart for those you lead

The above is just a taste of what these short chapters contain and the hope is that this has piqued your interest in reading The Way of the Shepherd.

(Kevin Leman and Bill Pentak, The Way of the Shepherd, Zondervan, 2004)