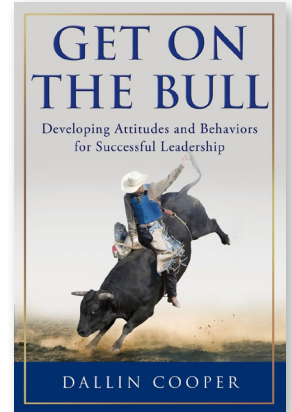


Get On the Bull

Developing Attitudes and Behaviors
for Successful Leadership

by **Dallin Cooper**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Through the mindset of a bull rider, Dallin Cooper takes readers on a motivational journey to better their own lives. Dallin has definite ties to bull riding. He grew up listening to stories from his father and former bull rider Steve Cooper. He was fascinated by his father's lifestyle and the daily trials and tribulations on the trail to succeed in rodeo.

Dallin explores all the elements of what a bull rider goes through to achieve success and how it relates to the lives of everyone. In *Get On the Bull*, Cooper creatively conveys his points by sharing the traits and actions that make up the bull rider attitude. The readers can relate to overcoming obstacles and adversity just like bull riders do every time they climb aboard a 1,500-pound bull who wants to throw them off into the arena dirt.

As Dallin writes, plenty of people—not just bull riders—face overwhelming daily challenges. Some people overcome those challenges. Others don't.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why bull riders are the ultimate example of leadership in action.
- The four attitudes that leaders can learn from bull riders, and how to put them into practice in real-world applications.
- The four behaviors of bull rider-type leaders, and how they work and provide benefits in action.

Introduction

Bull riders are masters of moments. On the back of a bull, eight seconds can feel like a lifetime. For perspective, the 2021 PRCA World Champion Bull Rider, Sage Kimzey, successfully rode 88 bulls at competitions. That amounts to approximately twelve minutes of bull riding throughout the entire year.

Hundreds of hours in training, both physical and mental, went into making sure that he could instinctively make the right decisions in those split-second moments when he was on the bull—a year of work and effort defined by twelve minutes.

Leadership is defined by moments. It isn't a title or position. Leadership is a lifestyle. All the seemingly insignificant moments work together to define our habits and character. The attitudes and behaviors that we develop in our day-to-day lives determine how we act in pivotal moments. The attributes of effective leadership need to be so ingrained in us that they become second nature.

But bull riders aren't the only ones who confront the seemingly impossible. Plenty of other people face overwhelming challenges every day. Those challenges may not have hooves or horns, but they're no less dangerous. Some people overcome those challenges. Others don't. Some people talk about starting a business. Others go out and create one. Some dream of their potential. Others take steps to reach it. Some wait to be led. Others lead.

Some choose to walk away and take the easy way out. Others get on the bull.

The Bull Rider Attitude

The bull rider attitude goes far beyond just doing something that most people think is crazy. It's present in all aspects of their lives. It's how they see themselves and those around them. It's how they handle setbacks and mistakes—as well as their triumphs and successes. Bull Riding isn't just a sport. It's a lifestyle.

Leadership must be part of your lifestyle. You can't have an "ethical leader" mode at work that you turn off when you leave the office. Like a bull rider, your attitude at home, work, and everywhere you go will determine your success. And I'm not just talking about your financial success, but also success in your relationships, hobbies, and anything else you value. Success in anything begins with your attitude.

There are four elements of a bull rider attitude that you can start applying in your life immediately to become a better leader, a better friend, and a better person.

Determined Optimism

Whether from nature or nurture, determined optimism comes easier to some people than others, but anyone can develop this attitude. To view yourself and the world with hope and positivity is a choice. When you choose to alter your thought processes, you can literally rewire your brain to think more optimistically. And these brain changes can happen more quickly than you'd think! One study found that significant neurological changes occurred within two months of consciously changing thought patterns.

The first step is to make the choice and commit to yourself that you're going to practice determined optimism, even when the obstacles seem overwhelming.

Humility

An effective leader knows they'll make mistakes. But they acknowledge their mistakes, learn from them, and try to do better. They know that blaming others or trying to make excuses only degrades trust and stifles their ability to learn. This level of accountability requires humility.

Acknowledging mistakes, accepting failures with grace, and being present with your team are only a few aspects of humility. Truly humble leaders demonstrate humility in everything they do. It isn't something that can be faked. But just like the act of smiling can make you feel happier, behaving humbly can help you become more humble.

Gratitude

Bull riders are the superstars of the rodeo world. They get the most hype, the coolest headlines, and the biggest jackpots. Bull riding is usually the last event in a rodeo, acting as the grand finale. You would think that this environment would cause bull riders to be pretty full of themselves. But if you ask a bull rider who the most important people in the rodeo are, you'll probably get one of two answers. One of the most common answers you'll get is, "The bullfighters."

Bullfighting is no laughing matter. Their job is to distract the enraged bull after a ride so the rider can escape to safety. So yeah, if you think the bull riders are hardcore, take a second to think about the guy who steps between them and the bull and says, "You run, I'll hold him off!"

That is exactly how you should feel about those you lead. If

a great leader accomplishes anything amazing, it is because hardworking individuals are making it happen. And they don't get the praise and recognition they deserve from the general public, but they better get it from their leader.

Perspective

The best way to develop perspective is to recognize that your perspective isn't the only valid one. Then try to gather new information to expand your understanding. Some ways to practice "perspective-getting" include:

Work on active listening. Ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand what you're being told and that you're interpreting it the correct way.

Avoid assumptions. They're usually wrong and prevent perspective-getting behaviors.

Understand your own perspective. Maslow's Hierarchy, The Bible, and airplane safety procedures all agree that you need to help yourself before you can safely help others. It's difficult to understand someone else's feelings and world-view if you don't even understand your own. Make an effort to identify your own thought patterns, biases, priorities, and cognitive blind spots.

Bull Rider Behaviors

Your changes in attitude will naturally change your behavior and make you a better leader. But can you also make conscious changes to your behavior to help change your attitude? It's a classic chicken-and-the-egg dilemma. Does your attitude dictate your actions, or do your actions change your attitude?

The answer? YES!

Mindset and behavior are intrinsically linked. As you change one, the other is affected. By actively working on both, your growth as a leader and well-rounded person can be significantly accelerated.

Margaret Thatcher once said, "Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't."

We can apply that same principle to leadership. If you have to tell people that you're a great leader, you probably aren't one. Instead, great leaders show their quality through their behavior. The behaviors discussed in this section will help you act in a way that makes you a powerful leader, regardless of your title.

Honesty

You may think that developing honesty would be as simple as "just stop lying." But unfortunately, there are a lot of deeply ingrained habits in most people that prevent honesty, such as justification, telling partial truths, and obscuring the truth. You'll have to identify these habits and recondition yourself so that honesty becomes your default behavior. Here are some ideas on how to start.

At the end of each day, write down any instances of dishonesty and deception that you noticed throughout the day. Ask yourself what fear or discomfort you were trying to avoid. Brainstorm how honesty could have helped the situation.

When you notice yourself bending the truth, quickly correct it. Often, when we find ourselves tending towards dishonesty, many of us double down on our lies. Instead, a simple, "Sorry, I was wrong" followed by the full truth can usually fix the situation with minimal awkwardness—and certainly much less than when the truth comes out later.

Authenticity

Because authenticity requires your beliefs, actions, and behaviors to align, it's important to be aware of your beliefs, thoughts, and actions. Here are some tips for discovering and then aligning these important elements of your character:

Brainstorm your beliefs. This doesn't mean writing down a bunch of religious doctrines. It's about making sure you can verbalize what's important to you. You may want to sort these beliefs in order of priority. This helps you see if what you say is "most important" aligns with how you spend your time.

Be deliberate. This is in the same vein as being honest and following the cowboy code of "Talk less, say more." Slow down and make sure the things you say and do align with your beliefs. Words and decisions made in the heat of the moment are less likely to be authentic to your values.

Get help. Someone who knows you well, like a spouse or close friend, can let you know when you're contradictory, inconsistent, or inauthentic. If you ask someone to help you identify your inauthentic moments, listen to them! Even if it's hard.

Grit

Believe it or not, grit isn't just a slang term to refer to people who don't give up. It's actually an official term used in the study of human psychology. The American Psychological

Association defines grit as:

“A personality trait characterized by perseverance and passion for achieving long-term goals. Grit entails working strenuously to overcome challenges and maintaining effort and interest over time despite failures, adversities, and plateaus in progress. Recent studies suggest this trait may be more relevant than intelligence in determining a person’s high achievement. For example, grit may be particularly important to accomplishing an especially complex task when there is a strong temptation to give up altogether.”

Since grit is a mindset put into action, you can develop it by improving the mindset. In addition to the items listed below, use the action items under “Determined Optimism” to help you develop grit.

Read/Listen to stories about grit. Part of the reason motivational speakers exist is because they work. When people hear stories about success and determination, they gain a desire to succeed themselves and to work harder to do so.

Write down your goals and put them somewhere visible. Our dedication to a goal increases when it’s written down and increases even more when it is somewhere we see often.

Share your successes. While keeping humility in mind, celebrate victories with those close to you, even if they are just small victories along the way. Taking note of progress is important to help keep you from getting discouraged.

Service

Serving others builds their trust and loyalty, but only when that service is sincere. Service that comes with strings attached, such as vendors wine-ing and dining big clients, does work. But at that point, it stops being service. It be-

comes a marketing tactic and a subtle transactional dance. And while it may be effective, it isn’t going to transform relationships, inspire trust, and build loyalty in the same way that sincere service does.

Actively look for opportunities to serve. Don’t wait for people to come to you or say, “Let me know if you need anything.” Be proactive in finding ways to help.

Conclusion

Sometimes, there’s just no substitute for actual experience. Training, workshops, podcasts, and books like this one all have a valuable place in teaching us lessons and providing new insights. But they won’t make you a great leader. There comes a time where you have to put down the book and start practicing the principles in the high-risk environment that is the real world. You’ll mess up. You’ll make mistakes that leave you winded in the dirt of the arena of life. But that’s okay. Own those mistakes. Learn from them. It’s the only way you’ll ever become the life-changing leader that you’re capable of becoming. It’s time to put down the book and get on the bull.



Dallin Cooper is an author, speaker, and entrepreneur. He primarily writes and speaks about leadership, ethics, trust, and relationships. When he isn’t writing books or speaking on those topics, he makes lighthearted YouTube videos about them.

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