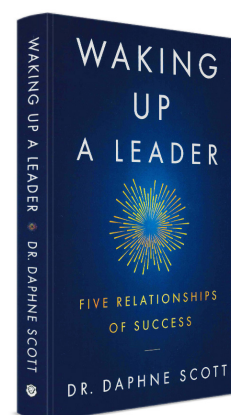


Waking Up a Leader

Five Relationships of Success

by **Daphne Scott**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Are you working too many hours, neglecting friends, and sacrificing your health in the name of professional success? Daphne Scott, a medical professional, found herself coaching people for professional success. Her fear, however, held her back from seeking her own success. Dr. Scott finally stepped into her change and shares what she learned along the way.

Waking Up a Leader walks you through five key relationships needed to thrive. Managing these relationships—time, money, the self, friendships, and the unknown—will decrease your stress, improve your well-being, and enable you to make the best decisions for yourself and your team.

Most leadership books focus solely on the transactional skills involved in managing: planning projects, organizing schedules, forecasting budgets, and so on. Some focus on transformational skills to help leaders renew their vision and better themselves. Few leadership books cover both planes: transforming the way leaders see the world, their businesses, and themselves, while simultaneously helping them transact skillfully in the workplace.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How we relate to more than just the people around us.
- Which transactional skills can be practices for effectiveness.
- The transformational skills that give understanding for meaning.
- How transformational leaders cultivate environments for growth.

What Do You Need To Succeed?

Transactional skills give leaders the ability to deal with the external who, what, when, and how. Transformational capabilities enable leaders to understand their inner why—the ultimate meaning, purpose, and vision behind their transacting—and cultivate environments in which people can do their best work and flourish. In today’s workplace, leaders need both skillsets.

Relationships

We tend to think that objects, people, and events outside ourselves cause us to feel a certain way. This simply isn’t true. Our internal reaction determines our initial experience, whether positive or negative, and we can learn to respond versus simply react. We can choose how we relate to our world. Learning this transformational skill will enable you to transact with others more skillfully. It will also change your life in whimsical and magical ways. In essence, a relationship is made up of an action that occurs between us and something in our world. When we become aware of our naturally occurring reactivity, we can choose to respond differently.

Attention

Scott tells the story of a team’s reaction to the negative comments written on Glassdoor by a disgruntled employee. The team had burned at least twelve hours stuck in reactivity of thought, fearful of lawsuits, and poor reaction from the public. As soon as they stopped ruminating about the future and focused on the facts in front of them, they came up with a multistep action plan. Once they came back to paying attention, they had a solution in minutes, and their stress disappeared. They saved time, money, and energy. They experienced improved well-being. A veritable bonanza of benefits and freedom. When whole teams learn to pay attention with mindfulness, they enjoy greater creativity, innovation, and problem-solving.

Your Thoughts and Emotions

After working on a big project for several months, Steve submitted a stack of paperwork, expecting feedback and a dash of praise for his hard work. The next day, his boss sent an email: “Looks great. Let’s keep moving forward.” Steve’s immediate response to his boss’s email was anger. He was afraid that the boss’s short response signaled he would not receive a promotion.

Steve had certain thoughts, which generated certain emotions, which led him to view his boss in a certain way. He

was responsible for any rude or inappropriate behavior that resulted from his subjective reality. Having a healthy relationship with our thoughts and emotions will enable us to maintain the best intentions and take the most skillful actions, as Steve was able to do once he became aware of what was happening for him. He took the courageous step of challenging his own story by talking to his boss directly.

A negativity bias lives within each of us. We have a way of seeing the world wherein we try to predict all the things that could go wrong to make sure our well-being stays unthreatened and permanent. Positive emotion is a powerful antidote to this naturally occurring negativity. If we consciously cultivate positive emotional states, we can increase our well-being by counteracting the hardwired negativity bias.

Time

We treat time as a finite thing, like books or coffee, that we can run out of or potentially have too much of. In reality, time and the clock are human-made constructs, and we have all the time we need to do the things we really want to do.

Relating to Time

We choose our relationship to time. When we relate from fear, it can feel like time is happening to us. In reality, time is only our experience of attempting to order our perception of a past, a future, and the present into some way that makes sense to us and allows us to feel sane. Our experience of an hour or span of minutes, however, depends on our internal frame of mind. Let’s say two people arrive at the airport gate ten minutes before boarding. One person might be thinking, “Oh my gosh! I wish I could just get on the plane,” while the other person might be thinking, “Man, this is great! I have ten minutes to sit still.” Same ten minutes, very different experience.

Transacting from Fear

When leaders transact from fear, they don’t take time to create a system or follow an accurate list. They try to multitask, and as we will soon see, they ignore their relationships and the needs of others. As long as we operate from a fear of not having enough time (or having too much time), we won’t effectively manage time on the transactional plane, and our teams and leadership interactions will suffer as a result.

Transacting from Trust

Leaders must take responsibility for their relationship with

time. Moment by moment, you need to pay attention to how you're relating to time. In your daily interactions with your team, as you look at your schedule for the week, as you consider the due dates for upcoming projects—in all these situations and many more, pay attention to your thoughts and emotions around time. Our energy levels affect our transactions. We can manage our energy with regular practices of rest and renewal and building reserves so we can keep the tank full and ready to go. This type of energy management makes our experience of time change in dramatic ways. And that energy affects those around us.

Money

Research shows that if we want to increase our capacity for joy, calm, and less stress, we need to start using money as a means to experience our time in the way we would like. We also need to value our time more than our money.

Time-Money Connection

The way we are spending our money, or earning it, is also how we are spending our time, or using it. Our relationship with money is never actually about the money. We can use money as an excuse for many things, but honestly, it's never really about that. It's about how we see ourselves in the world.

A Transformational Look at Money

When we prioritize and focus on money, our behavior changes. We become less helpful, a bit stingier, and less interested in the welfare of our fellow man. Money motivates us to work more hours, but it decreases our motivation to help others.

Gratefulness is one of the keys to unhooking yourself from a fear-based relationship to money. Be grateful for the resources you have right now because right now is all there is. Focus on what you have available in the present, not what you're missing or what you think you won't have in the future.

A Transactional Look at Money

Fear causes us to make decisions that do not support our well-being or the well-being of those around us. If a company loses a lot of money on one deal, management might decide to "save" money by cutting the entire marketing budget. However, this might be the time when marketing is most needed to increase sales. As with time, fear can produce narrowed vision. Decisions made in this scarcity mindset are usually short-sighted and fail to take in the whole organizational picture.

The Self

Meet Betty, CEO of a healthcare company she started when she was nearly forty. Ten years later, the company was thriving. Betty, however, was sleep deprived and anxiety ridden. She was also using alcohol to relax and subsequently developed a drinking problem. She was up at 5:00 a.m. every day, drinking coffee by 5:05, and checking email by 5:15. She worked until eight or nine at night and then had a nightly bedside beer.

Betty slowly began waking up to what was happening. She started realizing that she was entirely too attached to who she believed she was in the world. She was the successful person who gets it all done. But when Betty hit bottom, she realized she needed to change her relationship with herself.

A Transformational Look at the Self

Betty's story has a happy ending. She let go of the idea that she needed to do everything herself. She started developing other members of her team and delegating many areas she was controlling. She stopped working eighty hours a week. Betty's change didn't happen all at once. She started by making small choices.

Little by little, Betty challenged the stories she had been telling herself. Slowly, she returned to well-being and peace. It's not that Betty stopped having goals or striving to succeed, but she related to her work and her identity in a completely different way. She moved from the fear of "Who will I be if I don't do X, Y, Z?" to trusting "I will still be, period, even if I don't do X, Y, Z."

You can learn the skill of letting go of the self bit by bit. As mentioned, it's not some mystical practice for the chosen few sitting on a mountaintop. Everyone can learn to pay attention, separate facts from story, and consciously bring the focus back to transformational truths.

A Transactional Look at the Self

When we operate from fear, many patterns show up through our actions in relation to how we see ourselves. Part of the reason we get upset with ourselves is we think we should be the self who _____ (fill the in the blank: never gets angry, never says the wrong thing, always acts selflessly, always turns projects in on time). We create this fixed identity of ourselves as the one who does this and the one who doesn't say that. When we don't do this or we do say that, we judge ourselves harshly. When we grasp the truth that we are not the fixed identity we create in our

minds, we more readily realize that we often say and do many different things. We may need to become more skillful in some areas, and that's okay.

Friendships

We require connection with other human beings—that's why we seek friendship. Even after we become adults, we still require connection with others. Considering how much energy we put into our work and the fact that relationships occur there, too, it is worth creating thriving friendships in our work lives as well as out.

A Transformational Look at Friendship

Contrary to the way we sometimes act, our colleagues are not simply a means to an end. Connections at work improve the well-being and vitality of all concerned. We need to learn to take a genuine interest in people because they're people, not because we're trying to get something from them. When we've built the transformational connections, we can more skillfully manage the ups and downs of transacting with one another.

A Transactional Look at Friendship

One way to create a connection with people at work is to help people when they need it. Someone might need the information to finish a report or assistance in using a new computer program. Simply offering our assistance when we can is all it takes. Even handing someone a stapler when they don't have one nearby begins the process of supporting others to get their work done. To this end, an excellent question for leaders to ask themselves is, "What is the one thing my team needs me to do for them today?"

Developing Others

Leaders have an incalculable influence on the current and future path of an organization; it's worth our time to develop others. Leaders are not born with the transformational and transactional skills to lead; they need to be developed in the relationships we've been discussing. When we develop leaders, we take the first step toward improving the broader culture everyone participates in.

No matter where you are on the leadership spectrum, you can wake up to a new way of leading. Mindfulness is not reserved for the chosen few. It's a skill you can learn and practice daily. Doing so will transform the way you relate to your thoughts, emotions, coworkers, and the vicissitudes of life.



Dr. Daphne Scott is the founder of DS Leadership Life and the chief culture officer for Confluent Health. She is an expert at waking up leaders to a mindful way of leading, and given her improv comedy training, she brings a unique sense of humor to her work helping merged companies integrate cultures. Daphne holds a Master's of Applied Positive Psychology and is also a certified mindfulness meditation teacher.

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