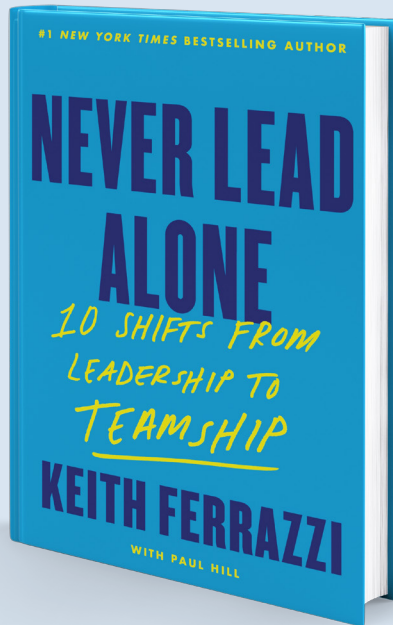


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Never Lead Alone

10 Shifts from Leadership to Teamship

By Keith Ferrazzi

Keith Ferrazzi is an entrepreneur and global thought leader in high performing teams and Chairman of Ferrazzi Greenlight and its Research Institute. He is the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Who's Got Your Back* and bestsellers like *Never Eat Alone*, *Leading Without Authority*, and *Competing in the New World of Work*. He is a frequent contributor to Harvard Business Review, the Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, Forbes, Inc, Fortune, and other publications. Ferrazzi's twenty-year history of transforming C-Suite executive teams has made him an agent of transformation among the world's greatest and most sought-after coaches.

A Book Review by Soundview

Mobilize the Full Potential of the Team

Keith Ferrazzi's book, *Never Lead Alone: 10 Shifts from Leadership to Teamship* focuses primarily on what members of a team can do to improve overall work output and organizational success. As will be shown, Ferrazzi believes that too many companies rely on the solid leadership of key individuals rather than hold all people accountable for increasing productivity and success wherever and whenever they can. Ferrazzi recommends reliance upon the use of diagnostic tools within teams to both help gauge and improve teamwork within organizations. He notes from the outset that the diagnostics he recommends are not very effective if the questions are just given to team members. The questions become much more effective if they are explained in detail to team members. Then when the diagnostics illustrate areas in which improvement can be made, Ferrazzi gives concrete steps for how organizations can improve in these areas. His book is one about promoting teamwork rather than about being a more effective leader from the top. It is about elevating a whole team rather than holding one person in an esteemed and prized position.

Co-Elevation

Ferrazzi begins his book with a discussion on the importance of teamship. He believes that a switch to collaboration is key. Ferrazzi goes back to his childhood to discuss his father's employment in the steel industry during Ferrazzi's childhood. His father would complain that he was urged to slow down because "he was making the boss look bad as he was out-working his peers and throwing off the measured piece rate by his work pace." While Total Quality Management practices would have allowed his father to help his team shine, the steel industry did not adopt these practices. Ferrazzi's ambition and education led him to want to help the manufacturing industry from the inside. This led him to advocate for teamship because good leadership alone cannot help the best teams. Quality teamwork is the only thing that can. For Ferrazzi, "the shift to teamship has two driving forces: co-elevating behaviors" and "twenty-first-century collaborative processes and tools" which require teams to abandon the importance they place on meetings. Ferrazzi then breaks down this shift to teamship into

“behavioral practices and process shifts” that he then discusses in detail throughout the rest of his book.

The first shift Ferrazzi recommends is “shifting from hub-and-spoke to the leader to co-elevation of the team.” The main rule he promotes is a commitment to “all goals of the team and each other to get there.” To illustrate the importance of this rule, Ferrazzi tells the story of Sergey Young who was attempting to open up his own time while achieving 10x growth in his professional life. It turned out that what was limited the progress of his team was his own hard work and ambition. He needed his team “to become the growth engine.” He knew he had a strong team, but he needed to figure out how to get them to work together. His team needed to commit themselves to the concept of co-elevation which “is the set of behavioral commitments among a team to the mission and to each other.” Teammates needed to stop merely co-existing and start working together. Ferrazzi writes about the importance of a team’s social contract which refers to the practices, behaviors, and beliefs that help increase accountability. No longer is the leader solely responsible for making changes to improve the team. Everybody on the team holds this responsibility to make positive changes. This shift often focuses on “an awakening to the hope and possibility that a new set of behaviors and level of performance is possible.”

Candor, Bonding, and Resilience

The second shift Ferrazzi discusses is a shift “from conflict avoidance to candor,” and it requires teammates to speak courageously. In order to create this “culture of candor,” Ferrazzi recommends “The Things That Matter Outlier Team Meeting” which is a type of meeting Bill Connors uses at Xfinity. The purpose of this type of meeting is to get teammates to talk about even the most difficult situations in a public meeting rather than after the meeting in private which is what people tend to do. Ferrazzi quotes Connors as saying that “If you do that [talk about areas in which growth is needed publicly rather than privately,] you can start to condition the whole employee base with being comfortable with candor and setting a new standard for high-performing teams.” Ferrazzi gives numerous strategies for increasing candor in teams. Among these are conducting small meetings with as few as three people to discuss difficult issues. These mini-teams then report back to the larger team. Another strategy Ferrazzi recommends is making sure to hire people skilled in candor in the first place. Teams need to come to an appreciation of the value of feedback as the gift that it is.

“Purposeful team bond-building” is the focus of Ferrazzi’s next shift as teammates focus on becoming ever more bonded to one another. This helps loosen the grip of functional silos. Ferrazzi states that “Only 41 percent of team members believe caring, trusting, and supportive relationships exist with their peers,” and “Fifty-eight percent of employees say that they trust strangers more than they trust their own associates at work.” This can stem, in part, from resentments that have grown over the years after trust has been broken. Oftentimes bonding within teams has happened through chance encounters in the office, but now that people frequently work remotely and with a desire to change things rapidly, there is no time to rely on these serendipitous

encounters. Trust comes in three forms: “professional trust, structural trust, and personal trust,” all of which are crucial. Ferrazzi recommends three different practices to help build trust. The first he calls sweet and sour in which teammates spend the first five minutes of a meeting discussing something that is going well and something that is challenging in their life at the moment. Second, he recommends deeper personal professional check-ins which are longer than sweet and sour and that give each person in a team a few minutes to discuss “where you might be struggling, personally and professionally.” He also recommends intimacy dinners which happen four times a year and in which people tell “the stories that made us who we are today.”

Ferrazzi’s next shift asks the reader to shift away from focusing on individual resilience in an attempt to prioritize team resilience. This requires people to be constantly lifting up their teammates. This also requires all members to focus on being members of their team. Ferrazzi describes how Cisco used this philosophy by asking their team “members to read obvious warning signs of a coworker struggling” which could consist of actions like turning off the video feed during meetings and contributing less to the discussion as a whole. Ferrazzi refers to resilience as “a team’s ability to sustain the energy we all have for the work and commitment to support each other’s mental and emotional well-being.” Ways to prioritize team resilience include performing an energy check in which members are asked to numerically rank their level of energy at the beginning of a meeting. Not all members need to be incredibly energetic. Everybody has their role to play. What is important is to look for dips in energy. He also recommends performing a resilience check in which each month teams focus on “topics shown by research to erode resilience” in an effort to gauge how team members feel their team resilience is. In these ways, organizations can actually help improve the well-being of their members which will in turn help the team as a whole.

Meetings, Agile, and Celebration

Ferrazzi’s fifth shift refers to building more broadly and boldly “through meeting shifting.” Ferrazzi believes “we’re now in the third wave of the reinvention of work.” The first wave focused on “Total Quality Management (TQM) and Six Sigma,” and the second wave centered around “agile software engineering.” Both of these waves were spearheaded by engineers, but our current third wave requires the work of human resources because this wave is concerned with people coming back into work. Ferrazzi believes organizations should focus on how to move forward with work rather than simply getting back to work. Work must be untethered in four different ways. First, “Teamship is untethered from the traditionally siloed org chart” meaning that companies must rethink how they define what a team is and which members from a different parts of an organization should be a part of a particular team. Second, teams must “embrace radical adaptability” and avoid merely being reactive. Third, teams must act both in broad as well as in big manners. This requires teams to embrace collaboration as a way to enable diversity to “give us the bolder ideas we need.” Finally, teams need to “untether from meetings as the primary form of collaboration” because there are numerous ways



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beyond just in-person meetings to deal with issues. After all, traditional meetings mainly work best for people who can think quickly and on their feet. Many people do not perform their best in these meetings because they need to take a moment to process information before being able to properly respond. Ferrazzi details the collaboration stack which consists of asynchronous, remote, hybrid, and in-person collaboration all of which work best for different purposes.

The focus of Ferrazzi's book then turns to agile as the optimal operating system for teams. Ferrazzi quotes IBM CEO Arvind Krishna as saying, "It's not the instinct of most executives to operate in agile because what has most likely made them successful and put them into senior positions is that they were able to progress and innovate by coming with a suggested outcome all packaged up with a bow around it and presenting it to the boss." Agile, on the other hand, requires people to show their work, even the messy parts. Nickel LaMoreaux, also of IBM, says that the benefit of agile is that it breaks "complex problems into manageable pieces and timelines." Ferrazzi notes that it can be difficult for companies to fully implement agile across an entire enterprise, but Ferrazzi focuses in his book on the basics that can help all organizations. In this vein, Ferrazzi focuses on key aspects of agile. He starts with "creating a customer-centric agile brief," breaking projects down into small pieces and then stress testing those smaller pieces. Teams must also be empowered to improve between sprints. Finally, a clear process must be in place for teams to make speedy and great decisions that details everybody who must be involved in the decision. Ferrazzi goes into more detail in his book about these different steps organizations can take.

Next Ferrazzi recommends "shifting from a culture of scarce praise to peer celebration and recognition." In this section Ferrazzi quotes Carol Clements of JetBlue saying that she wants her team to be excited about coming into work. She wants those in her organization to feel valued and to feel like they contribute in a meaningful way. Ferrazzi says that "our research shows that teams don't celebrate enough," and that frequently a lack of recognition is what prompts people to leave their jobs. Ferrazzi believes that even underperformers should be celebrated. After all, pushing struggling people down even further will prompt them to produce even less, and that is precisely what avoiding celebration does. He talks of the value of celebrating "the highs that they are achieving and...[the] things that you want them to achieve." He describes numerous different types of celebrations that organizations can employ. One of these is seeding recognition. This type of celebration is impromptu, and it asks people to drop "praise you know

will get back" to people. As an example of this, he describes one time when he heard an employee's father was not doing well. Ferrazzi called the father and told him how great the son he raised was and how well he has done at work. These words made a lasting impact on both the employee and on his father. Another tactic Ferrazzi recommends is what he calls "exploits of the week" in which individuals highlight people or teams each week who deserve praise. This type of praise reinforces those very behaviors that are being praised. Ferrazzi also talks about the benefits of peer celebration that occurs when teams round-robin share monthly about where they see people excelling. In these peer celebrations, each team member is tasked with praising other members of the team.

Diversity, Coaching, and Alignment

The case has already been made that diversity is important in organizations, but Ferrazzi believes that "how we interact as diverse, equitable, and inclusive teams remains an underrated and underexplored topic." Ferrazzi believes that "a diversity of people and voices achieves breakthrough performance." He delves into three different practices teams can implement to help maximize their DEI efforts. First, teams need to focus on otherness. Ferrazzi states that "The power of otherness is that it recognizes that the workplace is a microcosm of society." These differences ought to be celebrated. Ferrazzi talks about how he felt like an other while a student at Yale because he had a blue collar upbringing. In addition, early in his career he felt like an outsider because of his homosexuality. Teams ought to listen to the ways in which teammates have felt like an other because it will help them appreciate the different perspectives people hold.

Next, teammates ought to focus on privilege and obstacles. He is clear to note that privilege and obstacles affect people of all demographics. Having a certain privilege in life does not mean a person does not have very real obstacles in other areas of life. Privilege merely acknowledges that certain things in life are easier under certain circumstances. For example, it is easier to have money than to not have money. This conversation can be hard in fragile teams, and outside help may be needed. Ferrazzi states that, "It's not about victims or villains. It's about understanding who we all are and the hidden advantages and obstacles that we've experienced along the way." Finally, teams need to "hold out for the right slate." This means that if the candidates for a prized position are not diverse, then an organization is better off waiting until they have found ample diverse candidates to make a decision.

Ferrazzi's penultimate shift refers to "shifting to a team of

seekers who are each other's coaches." He talks about e.l.f. Beauty. Common belief originally did not hold that it would be possible for an online cosmetics company to thrive because the belief was that cosmetic decisions were too intimate to be made anywhere but in an in-person store. The people at e.l.f. Beauty proved this wisdom wrong as they created a successful cosmetics company. CFO Mandy Fields describes how she was coached by the company's CMO about her storytelling abilities. The CMO told her that instead of answering questions directly, Fields would be best served by taking her listener through an exploration of how she came to her answer. The CMO helped Fields hone this skill, and Fields in turn helped the CMO understand the financial side of the organization better. This is co-elevation, "the commitment to the mission and commitment to care about each other enough not to let each other fail."

A prized value at e.l.f. Beauty is candor, and the company tells new employees this from the very beginning. Everyone is responsible for caring about and for supporting everybody else. They do this through everyday feedback as well as through biannual team meetings where the primary focus is on giving feedback. To facilitate candor and feedback, Ferrazzi recommends Open 360. This requires every person on a team to share various information about each person. The focus is both on strengths and on areas in which improvement is needed. This requires trust and a solid commitment to the betterment of each other.

Second, he recommends "Dial Up/Dial Down." This is primarily a self-reflective exercise in which team members evaluate their performance and commit publicly to either dial up and do more of a good behavior or to dial down and do less of a negative behavior. Teammates share their commitments to aid in accountability. Finally, he recommends a "5/5/5 learning roadmap" in which teammates share progress on their goals for five minutes and then answer questions from teammates about their roadmap to success for five minutes before finally spending five minutes in which team members give "double-barrel feedback."

Ferrazzi's final shift is "from silos to alignment." After all, "Siload organizations are unaware of the challenges and needs of their peers so they maximize for their piece of the pie." He believes that "members of world-class teams know what their teammates are working on, what goals are being activated; they know everyone is aligned on the same critical mission." To increase alignment, Ferrazzi recommends a collaborative problem-solving teamship practice where teammates consider their mission, what remarkable things will be there when they are about to achieve that mission, what the biggest obstacles to attack are, and what is "most likely to derail" the team.

Ferrazzi's goal is to help his readers more fully understand the importance of focusing on a teamwork mentality. A mentality focusing on leadership is centered around a person or a small group of people. What Ferrazzi advocates for is that all team members lift one another up. Throughout his book, Ferrazzi effectively gives questions organizations can ask of their teams to accurately assess where teams fall on a number of import-

ant issues. He then gives tactics that team members can use in order to improve on the areas they need to in order to succeed. He also provides obstacles for teams to look out for. Because of its clear layout, use of real world examples, and actionable items, his book is easy to understand as a company strives to improve the efficacy of its teams.