

Followership in Action

Cases and Commentaries

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

As one who has witnessed and experienced the power of followers whose actions have ranged from indifference, harm, or goodness, I commend this book because it reminds us we all must act—act with conviction and courage to ensure the betterment of our institutions and society as a whole.

– *Edith Eva Eger, Clinical Psychologist,
Auschwitz Survivor*

Once your eyes are opened to “followership,” you will see it everywhere. This very fine collection of case studies and thought provoking essays sheds new light on the role that followership plays in every field from business to the arts, as well as the importance of followership to an organization’s (and a leader’s) success.

– *Robert Kelley, Carnegie Mellon University*

This book has everything – memorable teaching stories, academic analysis, global contributions, every day examples, headline grabbing events and provocative dialogue-starting questions. There isn’t anything like it yet in the field of Followership. What a great addition!

– *Ira Chaleff, Author, The Courageous Follower: Standing Up
To and For Our Leaders, and Intelligent Disobedience:
Doing Right When What You’re Told To Do Is Wrong*

Followership in Action reflects the vital interplay between practice and theory and theory and practice. The editors of this volume and each of the book’s contributors, skillfully and creatively address the opportunities, challenges, and ethics of what it means to be leader and follower – the critical importance of generative capacity, interrelationships, and authentic engagement. It is an important contribution to the field that should be read by many.

– *Hallie Preskill, Managing Director, FSG*

Followership in Action gives a long overdue voice to the “silent partners” in the leader-follower relationship. This collection of engaging cases and commentaries provides readers with a scholarly and practical introduction to the challenges facing followers in business, education, the military, the government, and other settings. Theoretical commentary and discussion questions equip students, faculty and practitioners to explore these issues in depth.

Followership in Action is truly a global treatment of followership, with contributors drawn from Europe, Asia, the United Kingdom and North America.

– *Craig E. Johnson, Professor of Leadership Studies,
George Fox University and Author, Meeting the Ethical
Challenges of Leadership*

Without Followership, there can't be Leadership! Drawn from business, education, the arts, government and the military, these crisp and compelling stories are a "must read" for all who want their workplace to be productive and their organization to be at the top of its game.

– *Meena S. Wilson, Senior Enterprise Associate,
Center for Creative Leadership India and Author,
Developing Tomorrows' Leaders Today:
Insights from Corporate India*

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Introduction

Research suggests that followers contribute an average of 80% to the success of organizations. Yet leading management scholars have argued for nearly a century that we too often assume the contributions of followers are an effect rather than a cause of that success. *Followership in Action* responds to this assumption by offering compelling cases and commentaries written from the diverse perspectives of more than 30 scholars and practitioners from Canada, France, India, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States who lend support to the notion that followership is more than an outcome of leadership.

Although followership as a formal discipline is less than a century old, the applied organizational contexts of followership have existed since antiquity. As the study of followership further escalates into the global mainstream of leadership studies, the need accelerates for leaders to enable followers to be more productive for the cause. Through the use of story in case studies, scholarly post-commentaries, and discussion questions posed for furthering classroom and organizational dialogue, *Followership in Action* offers an excellent way to more proactively engage future leaders and followers in issues that they are likely to face in various organizational settings.

Followership in Action is a highly practical and scholarly book to which leadership scholars, practitioners, and students will actively turn to better understand and apply followership theory to everyday human resource development, management, and leadership contexts. It was written with administrators, coaches, consultants, executives, human resource professionals, academic professors, and support staff fully in mind. Its content will appeal to academia, corporations, non-profits, and other for profit enterprises.

Editorial Reflection

Several years ago, I vividly remember being first introduced to the term *organizational capacity*. I deeply resonated with the potential of the term and have since been captivated by its implications. Over

the past decade, the relevance of the term has become increasingly noteworthy to me as the result of what I continue to see and experience in the world.

In the pursuit of my doctoral studies, my thoughts concerning organizational capacity turned to an organization's *relational capacity*. Well into the literature review for my dissertation, I literally stumbled across a journal article on verbal communication that specifically referenced the term *leader-follower* relations. It was a defining moment that extended well beyond what I was researching at the time. It altered the trajectory of my professional life.

I would be remiss not to mention a third term that stirred my passion for wanting to write this book. Appreciative Inquiry teaches that the *generative capacity* of an organization is limited by our appreciation for what is, imagining what might be, determining what should be, and creating what will be. This generativity, or lack thereof, begins with individuals who as active and passive participants influence relationships which, in turn, drive organizational processes.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, RELATIONAL CAPACITY, AND GENERATIVE CAPACITY

Each of these provocative notions feed my interest in followership and leadership. In the complex and ever changing world in which we live, leading and following is at the heart of generative organizational processes. To accept something less than what an organization is capable of achieving is truly beyond me, yet as evidenced by the cases and commentaries in this book, organizations do it every day. An understanding of, and appreciation for, followership in the leadership literature can lead to more generative organizational processes. It was for this purpose that this book was written. This point also leads to a bigger question that was first entertained in writing the proposal for the book, that is, how can we teach these ideas to others? How can we more effectively integrate followership into our leadership curricula and workplace settings?

An initial response to that question came one day while using two of my favorite texts for teaching negotiation and conflict resolution. One of the texts is more scholarly, while the other is more practical. I have always been drawn by the ability to practically apply what I am teaching to others. I asked the question of what those two texts might look like if combined into a single text. That initial mental note ultimately led to the creation of *Followership in Action*.

Followership in Action was purposely written with three different audiences in mind: scholars, practitioners, and students. Each of the contributors to this groundbreaking volume on followership was made keenly aware of the editors' intentions to

address these unique audiences while offering content to which each audience would relate. We believe that our desire has been firmly captured in the following pages by those who have constructed the cases and commentaries in this book. We thank each of the authors of this volume for their unique contribution. We also wish to thank Emerald Group Publishing for having the vision to pursue this project.

We now invite each reader to stand with us on the stairs of *Followership in Action* as it relates to the various topics of the book which include the arts, business, education, ethics, and government. We hope that you enjoy what this book offers and wish to hear how you are using it in your academic classroom or other corporate, for-profit, not-for-profit, or non-profit setting.

Rob Koonce
Lead Editor