

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

Ken Blanchard

Coauthor, *The New One Minute Manager*

Susan Fowler

Laurence Hawkins

*Revised
and Updated
Edition*

Self
Leadership
and The
One
Minute
Manager[®]

Gain the Mindset and Skillset for
Getting What You Need to Succeed

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Self Leadership *and* The One Minute Manager[®]

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Dedication

*To my mother, Dorothy Blanchard,
who taught me how to take control of my own life before
someone else did.*

—KEN BLANCHARD

*To my wonderful parents, Phyllis and Dick,
who helped me realize the magic of self leadership
by encouraging my curiosity, independence, and love of learning.*

—SUSAN FOWLER

*To my three daughters, Genevieve, Ashley, and Juliet,
with the fondest hope that they may be beneficiaries of
these self leadership concepts and tools and immerse
themselves in the good life.*

—LAURENCE HAWKINS

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Introduction

Today it's imperative that people become self leaders—individuals capable of setting priorities, taking initiative, and solving problems independently.

In the old days, command-and-control managers often made all the decisions and told people what, when, and how to do things. We now know that this management style can erode a healthy sense of autonomy and dampen people's initiative, creativity, and sense of well-being.

The nature of 21st-century work requires a more collaborative working environment. Advances in technology are decentralizing the workplace. For example, more people are working virtually and using cloud-based tools to move projects forward. Things are changing so rapidly that direct reports often know more about their work than their managers do.

In today's collaborative, decentralized workplace, it's essential that individuals become proactive contributors rather than reactive order-takers. For things like sales campaigns and customer service initiatives to succeed, they must be supported by people skilled in proactive self leadership.

First published in 2005, *Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager* introduced a proven path to empowerment in the guise of a fun-to-read parable. In the increasingly fast-paced world of work, this updated edition is more relevant than ever.

If you are an individual contributor, this book will show you how to be proactive about getting the help you need in order to succeed. If you are a manager or executive, this book will teach you the fundamentals about developing self leaders.

Our research shows that when individual contributors and managers align around self leadership, both become more engaged and produce better results. As a result, customers are happier and organizations become more profitable. In fact, a culture of self leadership is the hallmark of great

organizations. In these companies, leadership is happening everywhere, not just in the C suite.

So enjoy this story. As you'll soon discover, self leadership is not a rare ability reserved only for the supermotivated and highly gifted people of the world. It is a mindset and skillset that can be learned—and taught.

1

Do You Believe in Magic?

Steve cleared his throat and looked around the conference room table. “Welcome, everyone.”

After months of preparation, this was the moment he had been working so hard for—his first ad campaign presentation. And he was more than a little nervous. The ten men and two women sitting before him were his clients, and they would decide if his campaign was acceptable for the upcoming year.

Steve distributed spiral-bound copies of the campaign proposal to the eleven vice presidents and then handed one to Roger, the president of United Bank.

“I’d like to begin by reviewing our budget.” Steve directed their attention to the projector screen, where he presented the budget amounts allocated to design, production, and media buys. He discussed his media recommendations and the rationale behind each one. Next, he explained the underlying thinking that had gone into the creative part of the campaign.

“Any questions?” Steve asked.

Around the table, people shook their heads. Steve sensed they were just waiting to see what the campaign was going to look and sound like. “All right, let me move on to the creative approach we’re recommending.”

Directing the presentation from his laptop onto the projector screen, Steve revealed storyboards for the proposed television commercials. Next, he showed preliminary print ads and direct mailers. Finally, he read the radio ad scripts out loud.

When his presentation came to an end, Steve took a deep breath and waited to hear what they thought.

At first, no one spoke. The silence stretched uncomfortably.

Finally, one of the VPs said, “You took a much lighter approach than I thought you would, but maybe that’s good—it projects a friendly bank.”

Another VP spoke up: “You’ve obviously put a lot of time and effort into this campaign.”

After another awkward silence, all heads turned to Roger, the bank’s president.

“This is garbage,” Roger said.

Stunned, Steve went blank. He simply didn’t know how to respond. He nodded his head as though he were trying to shake out a thought. “I guess we’ve missed the mark,” Steve finally managed. “I’ll go back and talk to the creative team. I’ll be back in touch next week.”

Steve didn’t remember how he got to his car. He found himself driving—but not back to the agency. There was no way he could face his team. Thank heaven his boss, Rhonda, was out of town. He needed to find a place where he could be alone and think. He also needed a good cup of coffee. Driving through an unfamiliar neighborhood, he happened upon a place called Cayla’s Café. He went in hoping to find relief.

He gazed around the bookstore café with its solid wood tables and matching heavy wood chairs. It was a very different place than the high-tech chrome and high energy of the ad agency. He found solace in the cavelike coolness, and was warmed by the smell of coffee.

What had gone wrong? How did things get so far off track?

Steve ordered a mocha and let the warmth of the mug seep into his palms. After this latest fiasco, he was sure to be fired. As he thought about it, he was surprised he had gotten this far.

Five years before, Steve had felt as though he’d won the lottery. Rhonda, cofounder of the Creative Advertising Agency, had hired him straight out of college with a degree in marketing. He’d taken an entry-level position and quickly worked his way to lead production manager in charge of several large accounts. Last year he’d served as coproducer of the industry’s awards program for outstanding ad campaigns.

Four months ago, Steve felt flattered when Rhonda gave him the opportunity to bypass the typical career path as a junior account exec on a

larger account and take the account exec role on a small but well-regarded account—United Bank. Rhonda told Steve that she wanted to empower him, and that this was the perfect time to do so.

Steve saw his promotion as his chance to prove himself. If he could make a mark with United Bank, he could soon take on the more prestigious, big-budget accounts.

Or so he had thought. Now his confidence was shattered and his future in question. The meeting had unnerved him. The more he thought about the bank president's reaction, the angrier he got.

In a blinding flash, Steve realized the real source of his failure—it was Rhonda. She'd abandoned him! Where was she when he needed her and when everything was falling apart? Why hadn't she warned him that the client was a nightmare, that the copywriter on his team was a whiner, and that the art director was an egomaniac? Rhonda was the one person who could have saved him from this humiliation, but instead, she'd "empowered" him. He had trusted her and she'd fed him to the wolves.

Now that he had proved to be a failure, Steve was sure Rhonda would fire him. He decided to beat her to the punch. She wouldn't fire him—he'd quit! He pulled out a yellow legal pad and pen to begin drafting his resignation letter.

He was just writing the first sentence when his attention was drawn to a group of young children trying to muffle their laughter as they gathered under a rustic sign claiming the area as Cayla's Magic Corner. He watched as a small, vibrant woman moved in front of the children and sat down on a simple wooden stool facing them. She rested her forearms on her thighs and leaned close to them. Not saying a word, she gazed intently at each child. Steve could have heard a pin drop.

"I am Cayla," she said softly, enunciating each word as though revealing a great mystery. "And I am a magician."

She told them about an old Indian mystic who taught her the art of mind over matter. To demonstrate, she pulled out two rubber bands, entwined them, and pulled and tugged to show that they could not be separated.

Milking the tale for all it was worth, Cayla claimed she could separate the two bands using only the power of her mind—and then she did so. The children roared their approval. It was truly magical. Steve regained his focus and went back to writing his resignation letter, losing track of time.

“Did you enjoy the magic?”

The voice jolted him out of his deep concentration. Steve looked up and saw Cayla standing beside him. He rose awkwardly and held out his hand.

“Sorry, I hope you didn’t mind—it was fun to watch you. You’re a good magician. My name is Steve.”

“Mind? Not at all,” the woman said as she returned the handshake. “I was hoping you’d join in. My name is Cayla.”

“I like that name.”

Cayla smiled. “Thank you. My parents loved the name because it means ‘empowered’ in Hebrew. Maybe that’s where I get my magical powers,” she said with a laugh.

Steve gave her a wistful smile. “I remember when I believed in magic. I also remember how disappointed I was when I realized there was no such thing as magic. But don’t get me wrong—I still appreciate the skill behind the tricks.”

“You don’t believe in magic,” she said with a sigh. “Too bad, because it looks as though you could use some.”

Steve was too startled to reply. He’d had no idea he was that transparent. Cayla pulled a chair over from the adjacent table and sat down, motioning for Steve to sit as well.

“Listen,” she said, gazing at Steve with the same intense eye contact she’d given the children earlier. “You are obviously a businessman, yet here you are in this bookstore at midday. You’ve barely touched your coffee and scone. Something is bothering you.”

Encouraged by her compassionate smile, Steve told Cayla his sad story, beginning with his excitement and pride at being given his own client after less than two years with the company.

“But it wasn’t long before my dream turned into a nightmare,” he explained. “Even in the initial client meetings we struggled to establish an advertising budget. I had developed media and production budgets in the past, but I couldn’t tell the client what was appropriate for them. Nothing in those early meetings confirmed their good first impression of me or the agency—and it went downhill from there.

“There was no budget, no goals, and no strategy. I didn’t know how to direct my creative team without an agreed-upon advertising strategy. The client drove me crazy—no one could agree on anything!”