

THE BIG IDEAS

Inner Leader

It's time to Lead Without a Title.

Leaders Do

What failures aren't willing to do.

The Leadership Switch

Flip it!

White-Hot Action

On red-hot ideas.

Moving Thru Fear

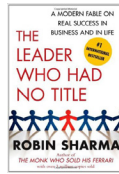
Expands our comfort zones.

Love

= Leadership's secret sauce.

Train + Practice

Like a pro athlete.



The Leader Who Had No Title

A Modern Fable on Real Success in Business and in Life

BY ROBIN SHARMA · FREE PRESS © 2010 · 224 PAGES

“The book you are now holding in your hands is the result of nearly fifteen years of my work as a leadership advisor to many of the Fortune 500, including Microsoft, GE, Nike, FedEx, and IBM, along with organizations such as Yale University, the American Red Cross, and the Young Presidents Organization. By applying the leadership system I teach you in this book, you will experience explosive results in your work and help your organization rise to a whole new level of innovation, performance and customer loyalty. You will also see profound improvements in your personal life and the way you show up in the world.

Please note: the leadership method I'm about to share is delivered to you as a story. The hero, Blake Davis; his unforgettable mentor, Tommy Flinn; and the four extraordinary teachers who transform the way he works and lives are all fictional characters—products of my overly active imagination. But trust that the leadership system itself, as well as the principles, tools, and tactics that it's built upon, are very real and have helped hundreds of thousands of people in many of the most successful organizations in the world win in business and lead the field.

Victims recite problems. Leaders present solutions. My sincere hope is that *The Leader Who Had No Title* offers you and the organization you work for a game-changing solution to quickly and elegantly reach your absolute best in these turbulent and highly uncertain times.”

~ Robin Sharma from *The Leader Who Had No Title*

*“Victims recite problems.
Leaders present solutions.”*

~ Robin Sharma

[Robin Sharma](#) is one of the world's top leadership experts.

He's also an extraordinarily inspiring guy. In [our interview](#) earlier this year, I was so fired up as he shared his wisdom that I wanted to give him a standing ovation half-way through our chat.

As the sub-title suggests, this book is “A Modern Fable on Real Success in Business and in Life.” It's an inspiring story about a disillusioned former veteran (Blake) who meets a mysterious mentor (Tommy) who introduces him to four exceptional leaders who change his life. Via this fun cast of characters, Robin downloads his ENORMOUS array of wisdom on leadership + personal greatness.

(In our first batch of Notes, we covered Robin's classic fable [The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari](#). Check out our Notes on another fable called [Be Unstoppable](#) along with our Notes on [Paulo Coelho](#) for some great Ideas from a bunch of his books including *The Alchemist*.)

If you enjoy getting your wisdom on in the context of a fable and you're looking for a fun read that'll help you tap into your leadership potential, I think you'll dig the book. (Get a copy [here](#).)

I'm excited to share some of my favorite Big Ideas so let's jump straight in!

LWT ← LEAD WITHOUT A TITLE → TAP INTO YOUR INNER LEADER

"Nobody succeeds beyond his wildest expectations unless he or she begins with some wild expectations."

~ Ralph Charell

"We all need to lead where we are planted and shine where we now find ourselves. Every job is an important job. And the awesome result of revealing leadership within the area of influence you're now in is that the more you do it, the more your area of influence will expand. That's a big idea right there, Blake. And regardless of whether you have a formal title or not, you have total control of how you show up in your current role. The highest of all human abilities is the ability each one of us has to choose how we respond to the environment we find ourselves within. And when each of us chooses peak performance and personal leadership, of course, the organization itself gets to world-class speedily."

'And so what does LWT mean?' I pressed.

'First, it's a transformational philosophy for work and life that *anyone*, of any age, from any place in any country in the world right now can apply to unleash their 'inner leader' and experience awesome results *within minutes*. We all have an 'inner leader' inside of us, longing to break free. We all have a natural power to lead that has nothing to do with a big title, or how old we are, or where we live. The twenty-eight-year-old customer service rep working for a multinational company in Los Angeles can access her inner leader using the method you'll soon learn—and in so doing, step up into a completely new reality in terms of the results she sees and the rewards she receives. The thirty-four-year-old executive in San Francisco has an inner leader begging to see the light of day, as does the forty-year-old entrepreneur in Salt Lake City. The sixteen-year-old student in Boston could embrace his inner leader and, in so doing, unleash a torrent of brilliance within his schoolwork, his extracurricular activities, and the influence on his peers."

It doesn't matter who you are or what you do. We ALL have what Robin calls our "inner leader." Helping us tap into our enormous potential is, of course, what this book is all about.

Robin shares his wisdom via four "leadership conversations" our hero Blake has with four fascinating characters that cover the primary aspects of his "lead without a title" (LWT) philosophy.

Here they are:

- 1. You Need No Title to Be a Leader.** It's not about a title. It's about tapping into your inner leader. Commit to doing your absolute best and striving to be *the* best in the world at what you do and your life will change in minutes. (Skeptical? Try it. :)
- 2. Turbulent Times Build Great Leaders.** We do our best when we're challenged the most. This is why [Kouzes](#) and [Posner](#) called their book "The Leadership Challenge"—in every single one of their 1,000+ interviews with individuals sharing their personal-best leadership experience, they were CHALLENGED. Turbulent times build great leaders. We just need to lean in, say "bring it on!" and crush it anti-fragile styles.
- 3. The Deeper Your Relationships, the Stronger Your Leadership.** The secret sauce of leadership? LOVE. It really is that simple. Robin shares Ideas on how to deepen our connection to those around us by being truly present and seeing + supporting their potential. Pro tip coming in a bit.
- 4. To Be a Great Leader, First Become a Great Person.** The first person we need to lead is always ourselves. It's time to dial in our overall vitality and energy by rockin' our fundamentals and plugging into something bigger than ourselves.

LEADERS DO THE THINGS FAILURES AREN'T WILLING TO DO

"Good morning, Blake," Tommy stated in his usual tone of confidence. "Right on time. I am

"By infusing leadership into everything you do and each thing you touch, you can live remarkably. You truly can realize your original genius. You can really be one of the great ones."

~ Robin Sharma

"Finding the center of strength within ourselves is in the long run the best contribution we can make to our fellow men."

~ Rollo May

impressed. Very impressed indeed. I know it's early, but one of the things I've learned about leadership is that *leaders are those individuals who do the things that failures aren't willing to do—even though they might not like doing them either*. They have the discipline to do what they know to be important—and right—versus what's easy and fun. Now, that's not to say that the best leaders don't have a great time. They definitely do. Actually, because of their superior ability to create success and lasting positive results, they end up having far more joy and delight in their lives than most of us will ever know. Few things generate as much happiness as knowing that you are fully realizing your genius, doing brilliant work, and spending your life beautifully."

Reminds me of [Albert Gray](#). He tells us: *"The common denominator of success—the secret of success of every person who has ever become successful—lies in the fact that he or she formed the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do."*

And, [Jim Rohn](#) echoes this wisdom in [Leading an Inspiring Life](#) where he tells us about the "two easies"—things that are easy TO DO and easy *not* to do. I have "two easies" written on my wall calendar these days—reminding myself that the simple little "easy to do" and "easy not to do" things are the key to everything.

An example for me? Well, my 20-minute timer just went off, which is my signal to get up and move a la becoming a perpetual motion machine as discussed in [Movement 101](#). It's REALLY easy to get up and bang out 10 burpees or stretch or whatever. It's also REALLY (!) easy not to do that. May not seem like a big deal (because in any one instance it's not) but those *tiny* little choices aggregate and compound in a huge way.

Throw in a few fundamental "easies" (like meditating, exercising, going to bed early, eating well, doing Deep Work before going online (every.single.day!)) and a ton of micro "easies" and it adds up to a TON of goodness.

In [The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle](#), Rohn puts it this way: *"We all say that we want to succeed, but sooner or later our level of activity must equal our level of intent. Talking about achievement is one thing; making it happen is something altogether different."*

Some people seem to take more joy in talking about success than they do in achieving it. It is as though their ritualistic chant about someday lulls them into a false sense of security, and all the things that they should be doing and could be doing on any given day never seem to get done.

The consequences of this self-delusion have their own inevitable price. Sooner or later the day will arrive when they will look back with regret at all those things they could have done, and meant to do, but left undone. That is why we must push ourselves in the present to experience the milder pain of discipline. We will all experience one pain or the other—the pain of discipline or the pain of regret—but the difference is that the pain of discipline weighs only ounces while the pain of regret weighs tons."

"The definition of happiness is the full use of your powers, along the lines of excellence."

~ John F. Kennedy

Let's pay the price in ounces rather than tons.

What are your easy to dos?

Let's rock those and remember the fact that NOTHING (!!!) feels as great as *"knowing that you are fully realizing your genius, doing brilliant work, and spending your life beautifully."*

P.S. [Seneca](#) captured this in his old school prose 2,000 years ago: *"You have to persevere and fortify your pertinacity until the will to good becomes a disposition to good."*

Plus: *"How much better to pursue a straight course and eventually reach that destination where the things that are pleasant and the things that are honorable finally become, for you, the same."*

Here's to reaching that destination where the most honorable and the most enjoyable things are the same for us!

" I continually ask myself a very powerful self-coaching question: ' What would the person who is the best in the world at what I do be doing in this very moment?'"

~ Robin Sharma

FLIP THE LEADERSHIP SWITCH

"Each of us has a leadership switch within, Blake,' Anna finally said. 'It's exactly what you were suggesting. Each of us has these true powers I wrote on the napkin slumbering inside us. And it's up to us not only to recognize that we have them but to also flip the switch. And in so doing, we make the fundamental choice that will radically transform any career—and every life: it's the profound choice to stop pretending to be a victim and to start presenting yourself as a leader. That really is the ultimate choice you have before you now, Blake: *victimhood or leadership*. Flip the switch. And always remember that the personal authority that comes automatically when you express your four natural leadership powers has so much more influence and impact on people around you than does the formal authority that comes with a title."

There's a switch within each of us that represents our ultimate choice in life.

Will we choose *victimhood or leadership*?

Will we choose to blame our circumstances for our challenges or will we choose the most empowered response to those challenges and create a better future?

Will we choose to be a victim or a leader?

The choice is ALWAYS there and it's always ours to make. And, the choice needs to be made moment to moment to moment of every.single.day. This isn't an "I flipped it! #done" kinda thing. We get to re-commit with every moment of every day. :)

In their leadership classic documenting the wisdom of Navy SEALs, Jocko Willink and Leif Babin calls this taking "Extreme Ownership." NO complaining, blaming or looking outside of ourselves. 100% ownership.

Let's flip the switch.

WHITE-HOT ACTION ON RED-HOT IDEAS

"Also remember that all these ideas need to be acted on *instantly* if you are interested in seeing excellent results. *Ideas are ultimately worthless unless you activate them with focused and consistent action. The best leaders never leave the site of a good idea without doing something—no matter how small—to breathe some life into it. Lots of people have good ideas. But the masters become masters because they had the courage and conviction to act on ideas.* 'A powerful idea is absolutely fascinating and utterly useless until we choose to use it,' wrote Richard Bach. *What really makes greatness is white-hot action around red-hot ideas. A genius idea alone has zero value. What makes it priceless is the quality of the follow-through and the speed of execution around the genius idea.*"

It's not enough to feel inspired.

—> "What really makes greatness is white-hot action around red-hot ideas."

Have any good ideas lately?

Maybe creative ideas for your business or art? Or a great idea to optimize your health or relationships? Or...

Did you ACT on it?! Or, did you kinda let it slip.

We're pulling out a ton of Jim Rohn wisdom here. One more. Rohn talks about the "Law of Diminishing Intent." Basic idea? You're fired up by an idea. The longer you wait to take action after having that flash of inspiration, the less likely it is that you will *ever* take action. Your intent diminishes. Let's not let that happen.

When you're inspired by an idea to optimize your life... TAKE ACTION!!!

" We are generally afraid to become that which we can glimpse in our most perfect moments."

~ Abraham Maslow

What's firing you up these days? What baby step can you take RIGHT NOW to make that vision a reality?!

MOVING THRU FEAR EXPANDS OUR COMFORT ZONES

"A mind once exposed to a new idea never regains its original dimensions."

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Out on that razor's edge, where you feel your greatest discomfort and all your limiting beliefs start to scream through your brain and you think there's no way you'll ever make it down, buddy, that's when you're most alive. And that's the place where your biggest growth happens. *The fear you move through when you go to the edge of your limits actually causes your limits to expand.* And that expansion not only translates into far better work but much greater performance in every other area of your life, man. When you consistently move closer to what you are resisting, rather than push it all away, you'll become not only way more confident in the way you do business. You will also become far more powerful in the way you lead your life. And you really get to see how strong you truly are. Being bold and embracing opportunities that fill you with fear actually turns that fear into power and introduces you to your strengths. As Nietzsche said, 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.'"

That's from the chapter on the fact that Turbulent Times Build Great Leaders.

As we discussed in [The Leadership Challenge](#), performing at your personal best ABSOLUTELY requires a challenge worthy of you. Period.

Therefore, we want to get really comfy with being uncomfy. We'd be wise to pick up one of [The Tools](#) and say "Bring it on!!" each time we feel our fear rising, KNOWING (!) that our infinite potential exists on the other side of our comfort zone while remembering that *each* and *every* time we move through our fears and out of our comfort zones we EXPAND our comfort zone such that the once-freaky is now not so scary.

Then, we're ready for the next level of incremental expansion. (#repeatforever) How can you be a little more bold and embrace opportunities a little more today?

P.S. From Robin: *"Just keep in mind that difficult days never last, but strong people always do. That hard conditions are nothing more than chances to become heroic."*

LOVE: THE SECRET SAUCE

"The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people."

~ Theodore Roosevelt

"Business really is all about people, Blake. An enterprise is nothing more than a human venture that brings people together around some marvelous dream that inspires them to express the fullest of their talents and contribute rich value to those they serve. With all the technology, disruption, competition, and transition in the business world today, a lot of us have forgotten that the whole game is about relationships—and human connections. With the pace people work at, it's easy to sacrifice relationships in pursuit of results. But the irony is that the stronger the bonds between you and your teammates—as well as with the customers you work for—the stronger the results. Actually, I should add that another purpose of business is to be acutely helpful. I know that sounds simple, but business is pretty simple. And the most successful businesspeople and the greatest organizations stick to the fundamentals rather than make things too complicated. Business is a vehicle to help other human beings. To engage employees so they realize their human potential. And to help your customers achieve their highest aspirations.'

'That feels so right, Jackson, this idea that business is primarily a pursuit to help other people.'

'Truth always feels right,' came the gentle reply."

Love. It's the secret sauce.

Here's a super simple practical pro tip from this section: Be the most helpful person you know. Seriously. Try that out for the day. If you were the most helpful person you know, how would you show up? Let's make that a habit.

“Train hard to get your health into high gear so that each day you are full of energy and radiant in vitality. Success belongs to the energetic.”

~ Robin Sharma

TRAIN LIKE A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

“What would you think of a professional athlete who said to a reporter in the locker room that he had made a decision not to train anymore, to stop all practice, and to cut out any advance preparation—but he still was sure he’d perform like a superstar on the playing field?”

‘I’d think he was a little crazy,’ I replied candidly.

‘Right,’ said Jet nodding his head. ‘Makes no sense, does it? Yet, Blake, before we go to work with the hope of delivering our best games, how many of us on the playing field of business make the time to train, practice, and prepare?’”

Reminds me of [Eric Butterworth](#) who echoes this wisdom in [Spiritual Economics](#). He tells us: “Ask the great athlete or the concert pianist or the successful actor if they arrived at the place where they need no further practice. They will tell you that the higher you climb in proficiency and public acceptance, the greater the need for practice.”

One of my favorite gems from Robin is the fact that *all* the great ones are SUPER consistent on their fundamentals. They identify what they need to do to perform at a truly elite, world-class level, then they crush those fundamentals every day—constantly trying to get just 1% better.

How would YOU show up if you approached your life like a world-class athlete preparing to win a championship or gold medal?! How would you eat? How would you sleep? How would you deliberately practice your skills?

Let’s remember that leadership starts by leading ourselves and go out and LIVE like that.

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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About the Author of “The Leader Who Had No Title”

ROBIN SHARMA



Robin Sharma is one of the world’s most highly respected leadership experts. He is devoted to the mission of helping organizations develop people who Lead Without a Title so that they win in this period of intense change. His clients include Microsoft, GE, FedEx, IBM, Nike, NASA, Yale University, and The Young Presidents Organization. Sharma’s books, such as *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* and *The Greatness Guide* have topped bestseller lists across the globe and have sold millions of copies in more than 70 languages. They have been embraced by rock stars, royalty, and many celebrity CEOs. Connect: robinsharma.com.

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.