

**ACTING OUT**



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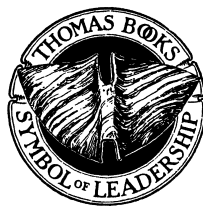
# ACTING OUT

## Outlining Specific Behaviors and Actions for Effective Leadership

*By*

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*This book is dedicated to my father, a man of true intellect. He taught me not to be afraid to try anything. He also showed me that by applying oneself, results will naturally follow. I owe much of who I am today to his example.*

*It isn't the job of a parent to be your friend, but if you're lucky, eventually you both get to enjoy this relationship.*

*I'm lucky.*



## PREFACE

When I entered the law enforcement industry more than 20 years ago, I knew I wanted to ascend to a position of formal leadership. I was fortunate to have this opportunity early in my career and have spent more than 15 years in police supervision, the last 12 as a chief of police in three different organizations.

*Acting Out* is a marriage between what I've learned and what I've experienced during that time; a discussion on how theory translates into practice. It is also a diary of my accomplishments and failures, and about the processes and practices I've used to move myself forward in my leadership behaviors.

In creating this book, I have taken the time to develop what I've learned into material that I can present to others in a meaningful and understandable format. My thoughts and philosophies about leadership and organizations have been shaped in a number of ways—and have changed over time. I have gained tremendous knowledge through both formal education and on-the-job training and experience, developing my personal leadership capabilities through a regular and ongoing mission to understand and internalize all I could about leadership and organizational dynamics. Drawing from these experiences has enabled me to convert my knowledge and understanding into leadership behaviors that support operational goals and functions.

*Acting Out* starts with a simple and straightforward premise: A large portion of our formal leaders are not as effective as they should be. Building from that statement, this book identifies the primary reason behind the failure of many leaders—an outdated and ineffective paradigm of leadership development.

*Acting Out* takes aim at the typical method of leadership instruction, which essentially involves providing information and little else. Further, *Acting Out* takes the reader on a journey through learning an

actions-based approach to leadership, developing personal leadership knowledge and behaviors, and understanding and implementing the “Leadership Replication Cycle.”

Nearly every formal leader has taken the time to read books or articles about leadership or attend seminars on the subject. But, while being exposed to this information often creates excitement for the individual, it rarely results in meaningful action taking place. This is where *Acting Out* separates itself from the main body of literary and other instructional information available.

This book intends for readers to actually “DO” something with the information they have been provided. Instead of simply providing information and then expecting readers to take it from there, *Acting Out* identifies specific behaviors and actions leaders can engage in as they proceed on their personal leadership development journey.

*Acting Out* has been constructed to help readers develop the habits and actions of purposeful and proactive leadership and to assist them in their ability to replicate themselves and these behaviors and actions in others. It has been designed as an instructional text, providing a broad and comprehensive range of material intended to aid readers in improving their overall effectiveness as leaders.

This book is but one additional small step on my personal leadership journey. I hope that it will become one for you as well, and that you will benefit from the information and experiences I have shared.



## INTRODUCTION

This book is about change—personal change, intellectual change, process change, and organizational change. It is intended to be interactive and has been filled with information, questions, and statements that suggest you take specific actions. Plan to take the time to answer the thinking questions and to complete the action steps outlined in the chapters to obtain the book's full benefit. If you do the work, it will help you become a more effective and successful leader.

This book is also about personal growth and development. It is for those who understand and embrace the need for change, feel there are areas where they need to improve themselves and their organizations, and are willing to challenge the status quo.

This entire book is about being an Effective Leader (*EL*). You will find this book helpful in honing and developing your leadership skills. What you learn will not only help you individually in your personal and professional lives, it will afford an opportunity to project your skills and knowledge beyond yourself, giving those around you a chance to benefit from your abilities. If you are not yet in a position of formal leadership, this book will provide you with insights you'll need to help you position yourself for your next career step and to become an *EL* when the opportunity presents itself. It will also help you become a better follower, which is actually a leadership behavior, too!

## POSITION YOUR MIND FOR GROWTH

While reading this book, consider your own thoughts and beliefs about leadership behavior and actions. This is important because thinking and contemplation are significant leadership behaviors, and they are key elements of the leadership development process.

As you consider and compare the material presented here against information and concepts you've been exposed to previously, you may find yourself feeling conflicted. That's completely natural, and in fact, it is encouraged. As Dave Anderson says in his book *If You Don't Make Waves You'll Drown*:

Just keep an open mind and realize that when you're feeling uncomfortable or even offended it's because you're being stretched, and that without discomfort and stretching you won't grow to your fullest potential as a person or a leader. (Anderson, 2006, p. xv)

In order to learn and grow into an *EL*, it will be necessary for you to exercise your intellectual muscles. You must be reflective and analytical, and you must thoughtfully consider your current approach to leadership.

Through this contemplative process, you may conclude that you are not practicing one or more important leadership behaviors on a regular basis or even occasionally. There is nothing to be ashamed of in this regard. We all have problems with consistency in our personal leadership growth areas. None of us are ever "done." We all have work to do to become the leaders we need to be, for both ourselves and our organizations. Recognizing that you have an area of growth allows you to place a focus on this area, and it gives you the opportunity to make a change.

## **LEADERSHIP IS LEADERSHIP**

There are many misconceptions about how police agencies and other public sector organizations operate. Despite being part of the government, these institutions always have to be concerned with the bottom line, as well as other issues common to private industry. Policing is a business, and the business of policing is subjected to the same universal rules of business and leadership. Whether you are in police work or industry, leadership is leadership, and management is management. The principles are the same. Your level of success as a leader is defined by your actions—it's what you do that matters.

Several excellent books have taken center stage in my path to developing a greater understanding of leadership and organizations and

how to apply this knowledge in a real-life setting. I will refer to these texts in the chapters of this book and highly recommend them:

- *Good to Great* by Jim Collins
- *Flight of the Buffalo* by James Belasco and Ralph Stayer
- *Thinking for a Change* by John C. Maxwell
- *Doing What Matters* by James Kilts
- *Straight from the Gut* by Jack Welch
- *Crucial Conversations* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler

I believe the combination of these books provides a comprehensive framework of material directly related to the issues of leadership and organizational dynamics. Of course, for any true student of leadership, this list of resources will continue to grow.

In my quest to continue to broaden my understanding and practice of the subjects of leadership and organizations, I have exposed myself to the thoughts and ideas of numerous individuals through seminars and literary materials, as well as through personal contacts and experiences. Many of these individuals have captured the essence of what we need to know in order to be effective in our roles as leaders, both formally and informally. In some cases, others have provided me with examples of what not to do, intentionally and unintentionally. In reality, we all learn from both positive and negative role models. In fact, as you read the book, you will quickly discover that I am not perfect, nor have I consistently engaged in the types of leadership behaviors to which I aspire. As I provide examples of positive and negative leadership experiences, I hope you will be able to learn from them all.

While some of the concepts discussed here may or may not seem to apply to your current position or situation, they are intended to be universal in nature. They can be applied to any number of fields or positions and can even be helpful in your personal life and relationships.

If you find any of these ideas to be too basic or simple, keep in mind that everyone needs a refresher. Even if you are fairly versed on a given topic, hopefully you will find pieces and parts in any presentation of material (including this one) to be useful. These pieces are all part of the very large and complicated puzzle of leadership—hang onto them and keep them close for when you need them.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MANAGERS AND LEADERS

Throughout the book, you'll notice that a line of distinction is drawn between "leaders" and "managers." These two terms are often used interchangeably but have been intentionally put into separate categories.

In every formal leadership position, there is a need to manage various tasks and processes. Managing is actually a subset of leadership; in order to be an *EL*, you must necessarily be an effective manager first. Effective managers know that dealing with the operational matters related to a business or division is critical for successful operations. Accordingly, the term "manager" should not be considered in a derogatory sense—quite the contrary. Managing is an essential function in any industry, and failing to effectively manage is as problematic as failing to effectively lead—perhaps even more so.

Managing, however, is a task-oriented, control-based process of maintaining organizational operations. Managing is not a growth-oriented practice; it involves neither goal setting or visioning, nor critical or creative thinking. Being an effective manager is where effective leadership starts, but it is only the beginning.

So you see, not all managers evolve into *ELs*. Leaders focus on innovation, evolution, growth, and carrying out organizational vision. They use their skills, capacity, and actions to guide organizations to be more profitable, functional, efficient, and relevant. More importantly, they do this with and through others in a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere.

## THE ACTIONS OF LEADERS

As the title of this book suggests, *effective leadership* requires us to take action. You will no doubt encounter many different types of managers in your life but perhaps only a few true leaders. For me, a key difference is that *ELs* take action.

In fact, *action is a required characteristic of being an EL!* You must do what needs to be done in order to benefit and improve your organization, even when it is uncomfortable for you or those you lead. You must act, despite the fact that some may not be entirely enthusiastic

about your decisions or the outcomes of those decisions whether intended or not.

There's nothing easy about leadership. If you're in a position of leadership, you've almost certainly been exposed to numerous books, seminars, and articles about leadership. You've also likely been pressured by someone, such as your boss, to do a better job of leading. Despite this, leaders—as a group—tend to fail more often and more regularly than start-up businesses. It is a complicated topic, with many facets and approaches. *In order to be an effective leader, you must be able to learn and understand complex leadership concepts, behaviors, and theories, and then, most importantly, you must be able to convert that knowledge into action.*

How can you take what you know about leadership and translate that knowledge into behaviors that will take you to the next level? Now you're getting to the core of this book. *In addition to providing information on the "WHAT" of leadership, this book seeks to answer the question of "HOW."* Throughout the chapters, topical issues related to leadership will be discussed, and you will almost certainly see parallels to the challenges you face in your profession. This book will take you further, however, providing you with practical advice on how to learn and grow personally and professionally, and showing you how you can teach others to do the same.

## HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

Just like there are numerous definitions of leadership, trying to definitively identify the various aspects, components, or segments of leadership would fill the pages of this book. Many descriptive words come to mind in this category: innovative, forward thinking, and visionary, to name a few. Instead of trying to identify the different segments of leadership in this fashion, we will take a look at what skills leaders need in order to be effective. To that end, the following categories will be examined:

- Communication
- Leadership Actions
- Vision & Direction
- Thinking

- Decision Making
- Organizational Change
- Organizational Development
- Personal Mastery
- Teaching

Each of these categories represents an area where leaders need to develop high levels of competence. Without it, they can expect reduced effectiveness. These categories provide the Stage 1 baseline knowledge for leaders. Once the leader has developed *knowledge* in these categories, they can transition to Stage 2. But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

The subject matter of any one of these categories could easily fill a book. In fact, I own and have read many books dedicated solely to each of these subjects, and generally the information contained in them has been very valuable (many are also listed in the reference section of the back of this book to aid in expanded reading in a particular area of interest). I have tried to consolidate some of the best ideas from those texts into this book, and for each category, I will take you through a practical overview of the material.

This overview is my guide for what you absolutely need to know, without all the fluff. It is not my intent to suggest that you'll be an expert after you've reviewed the content I've included here. On the contrary, what I've included should be just enough to get you started on your journey toward effective leadership. I encourage you to continue to collect information on these topics from other sources as part of your own personal and professional development process.

You'll notice that, throughout the chapters of this book, I have inserted brain teasers titled "Challenge Your Thinking . . ." These call-outs are partially for fun, but they are also designed to help us understand how our thinking can become too linear and predictable. Many of us have simply abandoned our creative side and tend to view the world from the same vantage point as everybody else. One study showed that by age 35, only 2% of the population were considered highly creative, whereas 90% of 5-year-olds fit into this category (Maxwell, 2003, p. 99).

Highly successful people think differently than other people. They look at the world from an entirely different perspective. They learn how to capitalize on their creativity, and they regularly exercise this

thinking capacity to look beyond problems to find solutions. *ELs* think creatively.

Moving to the next level of leadership effectiveness requires us to abandon many of the traditional paradigms that keep us moored to the old piers of ineffectiveness. I encourage you to use these “Challenge Your Thinking” questions as chances to stretch your own creative muscles. Consider the different vantage point from which the question was posed as you ponder it. Then, try to imagine looking at your own personal or organizational issues from a different point of view. Ask yourself if your current approach to problem solving is in need of a tune-up.

Now that you have this book in hand, make this your time to change the old leadership development paradigm. Use it as a study guide. Get a highlighter to identify important points. Keep a notepad nearby to take notes on the statements or concepts you feel are valuable (hopefully you find a few). Also, hang onto your notes until you’re finished with the book—they will be important when you get to the last section.

As you read this book, continually ask yourself if you are really interested in becoming a better leader. It will take real motivation to change your patterns of behavior. Try to see yourself in the information and examples set forth. Are your behaviors consistently in alignment with what is being projected, or do you have some work to do? Do your best to be objective about how you really behave. Don’t confuse what you would like to see yourself doing with what you actually do. Moreover, don’t be afraid to acknowledge any challenges or to make real changes.

Now, let’s get started.





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Along my individual journey of learning and growth, I have been positively enlightened by a group of leaders and mentors who have been instrumental in my personal development. The list of these individuals is extensive, but those who have had the greatest influence on me include Dr. Jack Enter, Gordon Graham, Bob Vernon, Steven Gower, and Dr. Richard Brynteson. I have had an opportunity to attend multiple seminars and to read various print materials by all of these fine men, and their messages have inspired me, educated me, and prompted me to act. I have also had the good fortune to counsel directly with some of them, and I will be forever grateful for their wisdom, guidance, and friendship.

My path to individual and professional leadership development has been rich with opportunities. From my very first job to my present position, I have been blessed with a wide range of interesting tasks, projects, and challenges, and I have been given wide latitude by those I have worked for in accomplishing these objectives. I appreciate those opportunities tremendously and the confidence conferred upon me by those willing to give me a chance.

During the past 20 years, I have had occasion to work with some fine individuals both inside and outside of the organizations I have been connected with. This wonderful group of colleagues has been instrumental in day-to-day operations and in the positive outcomes of many initiatives. I know that it has been through their work that many great things have been accomplished, and I thank them for their efforts—and for their patience with me—along the way.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Steve Shapiro for his significant contributions in the completion of this book. His presence throughout this process was instrumental in helping me arrange a series of thoughts and ideas into a meaningful body of information.

Anyone who reads this book will also ultimately benefit from his involvement.

Finally, I would like to thank my good friend Lt. D. Larry Sewall, Ret. Larry taught me what it means to be a mentor and, through his actions, showed me the meaning of the word “respect.” During my formative years early in my career, Larry was one of the most influential people in my life. He always made time for me, and this is something I will never forget.

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**ACTING OUT**



**Part One**

**DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP  
BEHAVIORS**





## Chapter 1

### IT'S WHAT EFFECTIVE LEADERS *DO*

*People are very open-minded about  
new things—as long as they're  
exactly like the old ones.*

Charles F. Kettering

**I**n all of history, there may be no single topic that has been written or talked about more than leadership. Any library or bookstore has hundreds of books on the subject, and a quick Internet search yields several million responses.

Leadership has been studied, deliberated over, and contemplated by scholars and lay persons alike for centuries, and yet we don't seem to be any closer to a definitive definition of "leadership." Similarly, the "blueprint" for what makes a leader effective has been equally elusive.

Despite all the discussion and scholarship, a disappointingly high percentage of people in positions of formal leadership would not be labeled as great or even good leaders by their superiors, peers, or subordinates. The truth is that many of our appointed leaders fail to deliver effective leadership within their organizations on a consistent basis.

In the past, presenters and authors have placed a tremendous amount of focus on identifying characteristics of effective leaders (*ELs*). You've probably been a part of this exercise at some point in your career: a group brainstorms a list of the wonderful and admirable characteristics of *ELs* they've known and/or worked for. I've done this too—and the lists are indeed impressive: honest, high integrity, good listener, and fair. It is certainly true that all *ELs* possess these charac-