

Developing Authentic Leaders: A Practical Guide for All Leaders

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Compiling a career's worth of insights, observations, and knowledge, Developing Authentic Leaders is a ranging toolkit for developing leaders.

Jennifer Jensen's ranging business book *Developing Authentic Leaders* dispenses pearls of wisdom to help fellow leaders be effective.

Compiling a career's worth of insights, observations, and knowledge, this book addresses topics including authenticity, leadership styles, workplace dynamics, inspiring teams, and improving communications. These combine into a toolkit for honing leadership skills, creating a positive work environment, and transforming into a better leader, with guidance on subjects including body language (here, the book distinguishes which handshakes represent aggression, weakness, and respect), leading by example, dealing with conflicts, and adjusting team expectations.

The book is formulaic in its organization and rigid in its structure, though. Each chapter consists of key insights, guidance, and reflection sections that are filled with bullet points. The chapters address subjects including the characteristics of an authentic leader, leadership traits, and insights into what can make or break leaders. The topics progress from rudimentary concepts to complex ones, as on strategies, creative thinking, and vision.

The prose is unorthodox, leaning into bullet-point lists at the cost of deeper expansions. The sentences are plain and direct without flowing into a sustained narrative. Advice on subjects like active listening, when to be quiet versus when to speak up, and the treatment of others appears without sufficient context and alongside aphorisms, prompts, questions, and (in some cases) point-by-point answers to some of the book's own questions, but without much in the way of connective tissue to hold it all together. The terse style makes the book digestible, though, and its key takeaways are clear if underdeveloped. Threads of thoughts are sometimes followed in brief, as where the book itemizes different types of eye contact, but they are fast moved on from so that the book can reach its next topic.

Ultimately, the book's rapid-fire, staccato pace evades nuance, and its reflection prompts, questions for taking self-inventory, and general musings like "How does a leader identify and set their priorities?" invite limited engagement among the avalanche of punchy tidbits and thoughts. The end of the book is a mere terminal point, as if the book has run out of new subject matter to cover: In the place of a conclusion is an assemblage of random facts and observations.

A sage leadership resource, *Developing Authentic Leaders* is a compilation of thoughts on getting the most out of one's team and communicating effectively.

JOSEPH S. PETE (October 19, 2024)

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