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Carson Sublett, Bosses are Hired...Leadership is Earned

Susan Jensen

University of Nebraska at Kearney, jensensm1@unk.edu

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Carson Sublett, *Bosses are Hired...Leadership is Earned* (Silver Tree Publishing, 2019), 223 pages, \$19.95 paperback.

This compilation of instructive stories offers helpful lessons about everything from how to handle a crisis, navigate office politics, and diagnose organizational culture.

With extensive leadership experience in the textile and pharmaceutical industries to draw from, Carson Sublett uses the storytelling method to share what he has found to be the foundation for effective leadership. Those beliefs are centered around the need for a leader to “walk the talk” and consistently demonstrate integrity, view feedback as a gift, and create an environment that fosters creativity. Sublett tells his stories with humility, describing both his successes and missteps. He also acknowledges the impact of his own mentors in shaping his philosophy.

Sublett makes clear that leadership is a lifelong learning effort, and that true leaders are not just appointed to a position, but are also those who inspire top performance sustained over time. He also argues that while there is no perfect formula for leadership, and leaders face increasingly complex problems, focusing on three key areas can earn you the label of leader: 1) ensure you have the right team; 2) foster an engaging environment; and 3) provide a clear vision that inspires each person to take ownership for shared success.

While the stories are entertaining (albeit sometimes overly detailed), the true value comes from what we can learn from each story. Sublett makes this easy for the reader as each chapter includes a story, “lessons learned” from his experience, and “the mirror test” which includes self-reflection questions that prompt the reader to apply those lessons to their own experiences and aspirations. To further support introspection, Sublett urges the reader to create a “personal resume” that involves writing down your identities, roles, and life priorities.

The final chapter offers a quick reference collection of those “lessons learned” including:

- leaders earn their role by cultivating trust, seeking feedback from their team, and recognizing everyone wants to be successful;
- hard work, honest self-reflection, and accountability for our actions are essential to becoming an effective leader;
- leaders set the tone for how an organization responds to challenges;
- before initiating change, a leader must invest time to learn the lay of the land – politics is a reality in all organizations; and
- to lead you must inspire...and to inspire you must believe in what you do.

An easy read, this book offers advice and encouragement to both experienced and aspiring leaders. Sublett helps the reader understand that leadership can be both earned and learned.

Susan M. Jensen, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Management
College of Business & Technology, University of Nebraska Kearney