



Leader

Know, love and inspire your people

Katy Granville-Chapman
and Emmie Bidston

Foreword by
Sir Anthony Seldon

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Foreword

What constitutes good and bad leadership has fascinated me all of my life. I grew up in the long shadow of the Second World War. I never ceased to be moved by listening to Churchill's speeches and learning more about him. A good leader. Hitler was ubiquitous in my formative years too, in the school curriculum, in films and in literature. A bad leader, albeit with many of the qualities that good leaders need, including oratory, a vision and the ability to motivate his team. As I grew older, I came to realise that leadership is the magic ingredient that can transform any institution, country, company or college for the better. Or worse.

A vision is essential for a leader, but having a vision in itself is not enough. Hitler, for example, had a profoundly dehumanising and evil vision. Leaders operate in a moral universe. To be a good leader they need to embody goodness. But even a vision and ethics are insufficient: the excellent leader needs to find a vision which is appropriate for the organisation at the moment at which they take command. Coming up with an inappropriate vision explains why one leader could be a great success in one organisation but be utterly baleful in another. The true leader will find a vision which is organic to the organisation they have taken over and true to its traditions, rather than implanting an off-the-shelf generic plan dreamed up by a management consultant. This book takes you through how to create a collective vision that everyone can engage with and feel part of.

When I was headmaster of Brighton College (and, later, Wellington College), I became increasingly excited by the prospect of teaching students and staff about leadership. At the latter institution, I was fortunate to have on my staff Katy Granville-Chapman and Emmie Bidston, the authors of this book. Both of them embodied in their lives at the school, and in their interactions with students and staff, an authenticity and a singularity of vision for leadership that prioritises the flourishing of others.

In schools, it is very clear to students, if not always to the teachers concerned, who has sincerity. Students can see through teachers far more quickly than many realise. Katy and Emmie have that gift of effortless authenticity in abundance, and it informs every page of this book.

I believe that every school student and employee should be taught about leadership – good as well as bad, and the leadership traits which pertain to various situations and those which are task specific. The captain of a nuclear submarine requires many attributes in common with the captain of Aston Villa Football Club, but there will be some skills which are particular to each role. In the right hands, few things are more fascinating to learn about than leadership and the qualities we all need to develop as future leaders.

People who might never be turned on by academic work can become highly motivated and fired up when considering leadership and when they are given leadership tasks. They quickly learn that a good leader does not need to shout, coerce or use fear; it is much more effective to lead with clarity, calm, compassion and character.

The challenges we will face in the future include coping with pandemics, tackling global warming and the climate emergency, and helping to rebuild communities torn apart by globalisation and artificial intelligence. The skills required are far more than intellectual. Very few of the greatest political leaders in Britain have been leading intellectuals. Prime ministers customarily come into Downing Street with aides who have very high IQs and brains the size of planets, but who leave after a few months with their missions incomplete.

The leaders of the future need to be rounded figures. They need to be in touch with themselves, with their feelings, with their bodies and, most importantly, with other people. They need to be principled and have a clear vision about how to build a better world.

This wonderful book discusses these and many other topics, and I cannot recommend it too highly.

Sir Anthony Seldon
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham

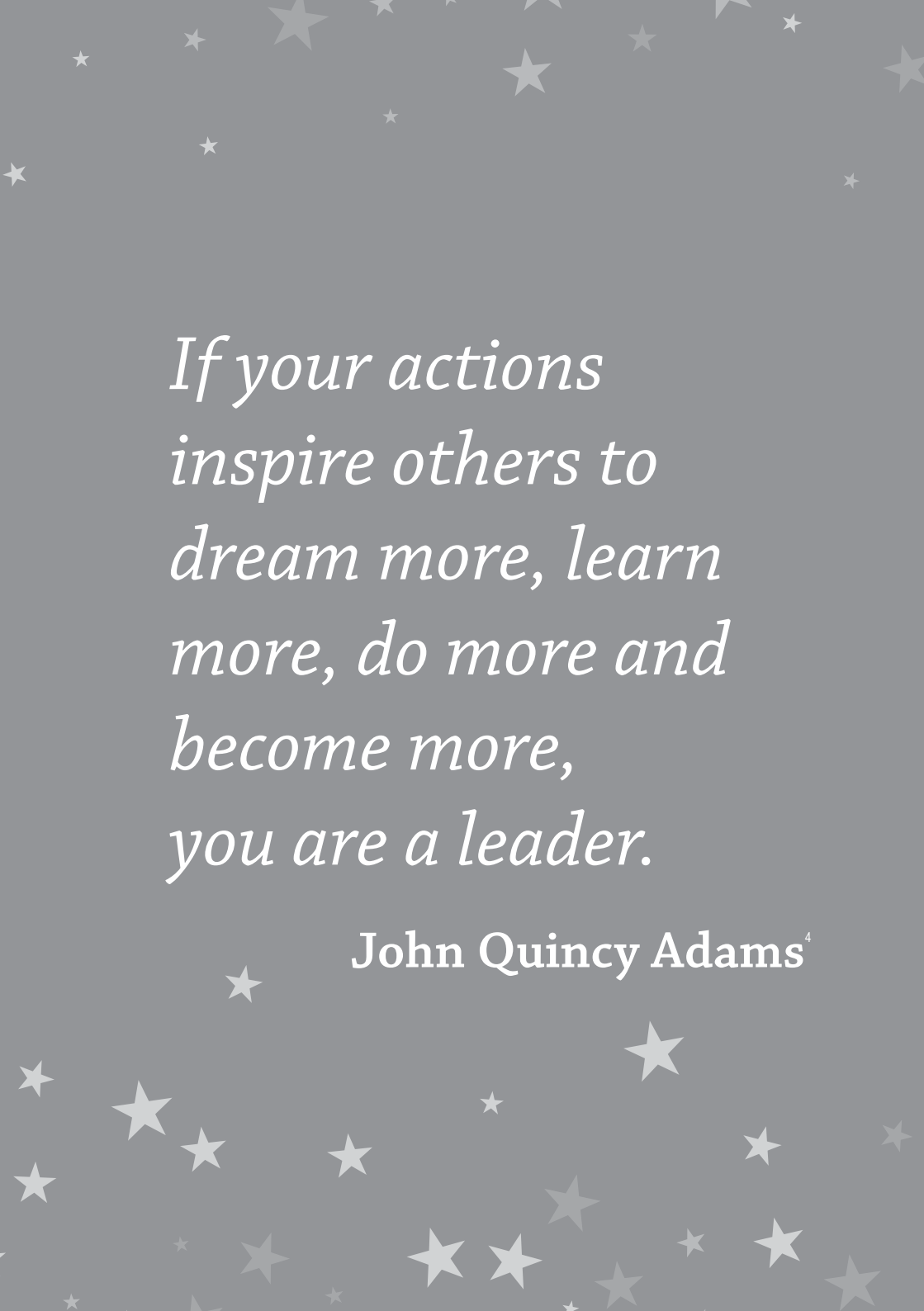
Preface

It could have happened to anyone. It was just unlucky that he was the boss on shift that day. Fifty-four years old and many miles from home. Drawn by the promise of good wages in exchange for the risks that inevitably came with the job. It was meant to be a seven-day tour. It turned into a sixty-nine-day ordeal of darkness and despair.

On 5 August 2010, Luis Urzua found himself trapped thousands of feet below ground with thirty-three other men. The San José gold and copper mine in Chile had collapsed, leaving them imprisoned under tonnes of rock. They were fearful of being crushed to death by further rock falls and had no way to communicate with the outside world. No way to know how long they would need to wait or how long they would need to make the two days' worth of supplies last.¹

The leadership challenge was enormous. Hungry, scared men started forcing open the food cupboard in their fear and grabbing the little that was there. But their shift manager, Urzua, had a reputation for being protective and loving his team. When he intervened in the situation, they trusted him enough to step back and agree to ration the supplies, living off one teaspoon of tuna and a half-glass of milk every few days. Urzua kept reminding the miners that they were all in this together. They were a team. They ate their meagre rations together in the same spot, at the same time, building a sense of belonging. Every man had a role, everyone had a responsibility. They were all involved and utterly focused on achieving their one goal – survival.²

Their first contact with the outside world came after seventeen days, which had left them close to starvation. It was another fifty-two days before they were rescued and finally hoisted, one by one, to the surface. No miner wanted to be transported to the hospital before the last man had been brought out.³



*If your actions
inspire others to
dream more, learn
more, do more and
become more,
you are a leader.*

John Quincy Adams⁴

Urzua never spoke about his own leadership role during the crisis, although many others praised him. He talked instead about his men, their talents and their welfare. He thanked the rescuers and the health officials. He did everything he could to look after his people. He was the last man to be lifted out of the shaft, merely commenting: 'It's been a bit of a long shift.'⁵

Similar to many other individuals who have faced extreme circumstances and adversity, Urzua exemplifies the fact that some people can step up and become effective leaders in the face of impossible circumstances. Yet many others who encounter challenges struggle to bring out the best in their teams, pulling people apart rather than together and creating a culture of fear and blame.

What exactly is it that good leaders do to enable their teams to succeed? How do they think? How much of their success can be predicted by IQ, talent or temperament? What do the recent advancements in neuroscience and research teach us about effective leadership?

This book reflects our efforts to explore these questions. In the following chapters, we will take you on a journey to meet leaders from multiple different spheres. We will show you how effective leaders enable their people to flourish. These individuals will, at times, appear to go against mainstream views of strong leadership. However, the performance they have enabled has been extraordinary.

Great leaders have become great because they have mastered three key lessons:

Lesson 1: Know your people. Great leaders know their team's values and strengths through great listening, powerful questioning and empathy.

Lesson 2: Love your people. Great leaders love their team through compassion, service and creating psychological safety.

Lesson 3: Inspire your people. Great leaders inspire their team through a clear sense of purpose, optimism and gratitude.

Our journey to understand leadership began before we met. Katy Granville-Chapman served in the British Army, deploying to Iraq, and Emmie Bidston in the Civil Service after graduating from Cambridge with a degree in economics.

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We saw outstanding examples, in both government and the military, of leaders enthusing and engaging people through compassionate and positive leadership. We also saw examples where poor leadership resulted in the loss of morale and motivation, and had a negative impact on performance and mission outcomes. These experiences sparked in us an insatiable curiosity about what makes a great leader and how to grow leaders who bring out the best in people.

In later years we entered teaching, which is where we met, and our leadership adventure began. This led to us helping to advise and train numerous organisations, including England Rugby and the Civil Service, and eventually to advise the Prime Minister's Office. Katy co-founded Global Social Leaders with Jon Harper, a positive leadership and entrepreneurship programme, which now has participants in 102 countries. Emmie co-founded the Young African Leadership Program, a charity that supports innovative African schools as they seek to support, teach and inspire the next generation of African leaders.

We have worked on leadership within elite sport, with government ministers, army officers, head teachers, Oxford University, charities and countless incredible young people from across the globe. Many of these leaders were already serving their people and helping them to flourish – with outstanding results. However, others were harder to convince. They were suspicious of servant leadership (the idea that the main role of the leader is to serve) and perceived compassion as weak and ineffective. This book is our answer to them, because it's not enough for leaders to lead through their own ego. It's not enough to shout orders based on leaders' own values and ideas. Only by watching, listening and working with others can we get the most out of teams and communities.

This book is also our celebration of all the inspiring young people we have worked with, who have set up social action projects around the world and are already having an enormous impact.

By the time you finish reading this book, we hope you will be reconsidering some fundamental assumptions about leadership and what kinds of leaders create high-performing teams. We have set you challenges to complete individually and also with your teams (so please have a notebook handy while you read). Building on the latest evidence, stories and our own experience, we will help you to become the best leader you can be: a leader who knows, loves and inspires their people.

Chapter 4

More Shackleton, Less Scott

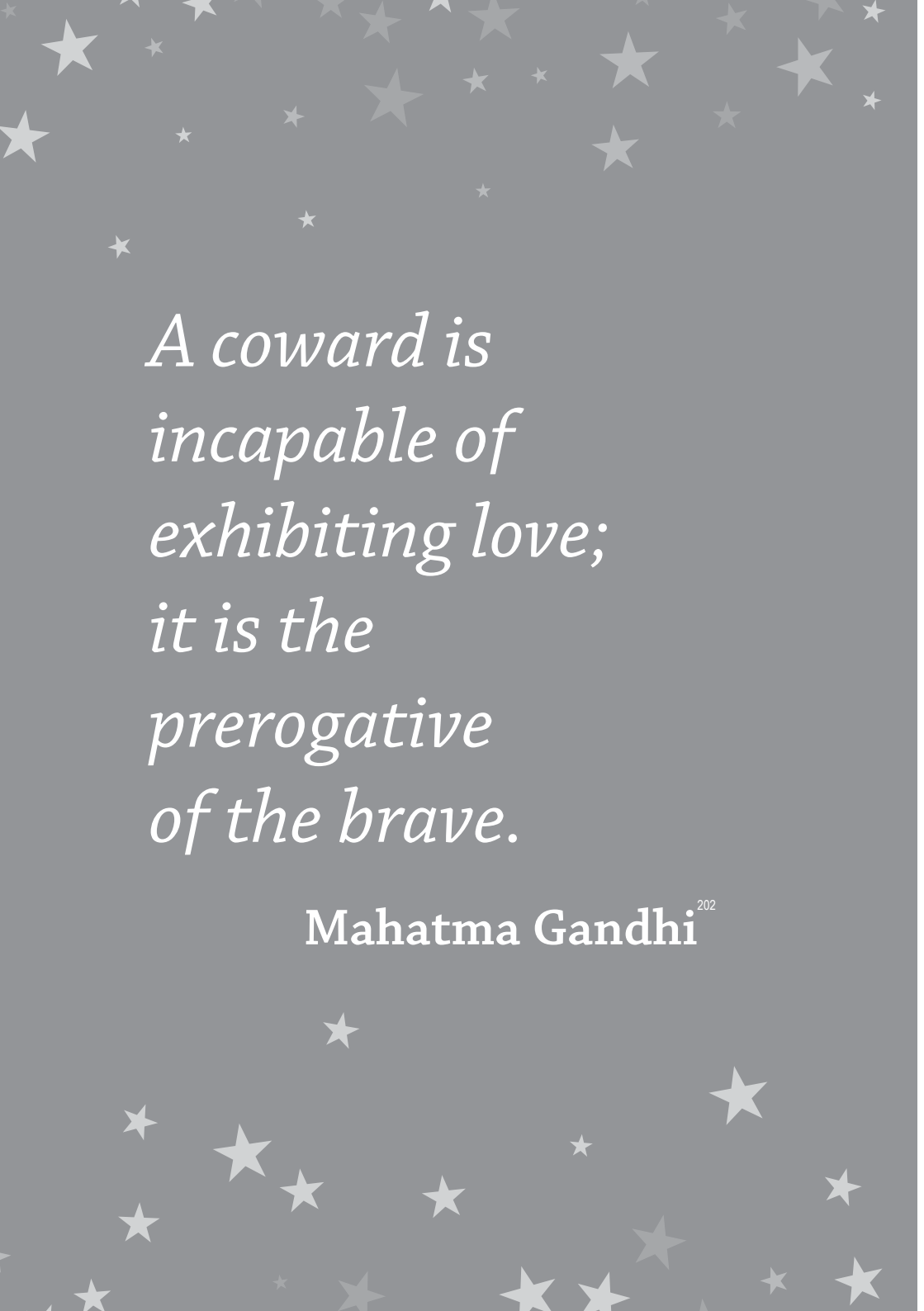
It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt⁶

Love and courage are inextricably combined. The word courage has a Latin root, *cor*, which means heart. To love your people sacrificially will take incredible courage on your part: you will need to be fearless about failure in your own life and the lives of others and create a culture of fearless communication.

Shackleton vs. Scott

Just over 100 years ago a great race was taking place. A race that has been immortalised in books, documentaries and films. A race that required immense courage and placed huge demands on its leaders. A



*A coward is
incapable of
exhibiting love;
it is the
prerogative
of the brave.*

Mahatma Gandhi²⁰²

race that revealed men's true characters and inspired generations of new adventurers. The race to the South Pole.⁸

On 14 December 1911, the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen and his team became the first to reach the South Pole. Weeks later the British explorer Robert Scott and four of his men also arrived, too late to win the race and so exhausted that they tragically perished on the horrific journey home. In August 1914, a further expedition left the UK for the Antarctic. This was the British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition under the leadership of Ernest Shackleton. He planned to cross Antarctica from a base on the Weddell Sea to McMurdo Sound, via the South Pole, but the expedition ship *Endurance* became trapped in ice.⁹

Both Scott and Shackleton's lives and leadership were defined by brutal Antarctic journeys and both of their most famous expeditions failed. Scott failed to be the first to reach the South Pole. Shackleton failed to cross Antarctica – in fact, his team never even set foot on it. Both have gone down in history as models of unflinching determination and courage.

The key difference, however, is that Shackleton managed to bring all twenty-seven of his men home alive, against all the odds and after 634 days of incredible suffering. There has been heated debate about the causes of Scott's tragic end and how Shackleton defied the odds to make it back, but their leadership was certainly a key component.

In both men's diaries you can read of the brutal journeys they made and catch glimpses of their very different styles of leadership. In Scott's diaries and accounts of his leadership, you see a man confident in his own ability and decision-making.¹⁰ He preferred to make decisions alone, without the advice or counsel of his team, rarely explaining the logic behind his choices to others. He had a strong emphasis on hierarchy – the team were expected to obey without asking questions. He was not interested in their views or ideas. This comes across clearly in his resistance to taking advice from others about the best way to travel across the terrain. He ignored those with more experience who advised using dogs and sleds and instead chose untested motorised sledges and ponies. The motorised sledges consequently broke and the ponies died in the harsh conditions and had to be fed to the few dogs they took with them.

Towards the end of his journey, Scott comes across as depressive and endlessly critical of himself and his team. Although they stayed together

physically until the end, there is little sense of emotional togetherness. Scott failed to overcome the despair in his own mind and heart or find a solution to the diminishing supplies and deteriorating health. A leader in science, determined to keep collecting specimens as they struggled on, but less of a leader of men.

Shackleton was a different sort of leader.¹¹ His diaries and letters have the benefit of being edited after he returned safely from the expedition, but even so, the tone is entirely different. There is an air of positivity and optimism amid the desperate circumstances they were facing. There is a cheerfulness even after the *Endurance* is crushed by ice and sinks, leaving the men stranded on the ice with three small lifeboats, several tents and few supplies. Shackleton knew at that point that the battle for survival he was facing was not just against the treacherous conditions externally, but also the internal battles against fear, hopelessness and disengagement. He managed this by maintaining routines, order and regular interactions of the team. He knew that he needed to model optimism and energy in all he said and did. His own mindset would be crucial for the well-being and survival of his crew. When they were finally marooned on Elephant Island, with barely anything to eat and little chance of rescue, there are records of them laughing, of silly anecdotes and of banjo concerts amid the suffering.

Shackleton forged extremely strong bonds with his team. He was empathic to what his men were going through and skilled at dealing with conflict. He got stuck in with the day-to-day chores of the expedition, his service creating an atmosphere where hierarchy and rank were less important than individual strengths and abilities. He wanted to know what they were thinking and feeling, and this created a bond of unity. Shackleton's team worked together against enormous odds, even selflessly dividing their last rations.

After realising there was no way they could all leave Elephant Island, Shackleton left twenty-two of his men on that bleak and barren rock with only two upturned boats made into a shelter – nicknamed 'the snuggery'. He took five men with him on a small boat and sailed more than 800 miles to the island of South Georgia to get help. Defying all probabilities, they made it to land and across a perilous mountain range to find help at a small whaling station.

Even then it looked like it would be impossible to get back and rescue the other men from Elephant Island. Shackleton's first three attempts failed and he had to turn back as the pack ice threatened to trap and crush them, as it had done to *Endurance*. But there was no way Shackleton was abandoning his men. They tried a fourth time and were finally successful. Four months after leaving Elephant Island Shackleton made it back for his stranded men. They had all survived. As he wrote to his wife: 'Not a life lost and we have been through Hell.'¹²

Shackleton understood that a leader's primary role is to look after their people and keep them safe, whatever it takes. He had a deep sense of loyalty to his fellow crew members. His men knew this and that is why they followed him and gave their best to him. That hope, unity and the belief he instilled in them were crucial to their survival.

Scott was still an amazing explorer, admired and revered for his determination. But if you were going to choose someone to lead you, it would be worth taking the advice of Antarctic explorer Sir Raymond Priestley, who said in his 1956 address to the British Association: 'Scott for scientific method, Amundsen for speed and efficiency but when disaster strikes and all hope is gone, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton.'¹³

Endnotes

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- 11 Lansing, *Endurance*.
- 12 E. Shackleton, A letter from Ernest Shackleton to his wife, Emily (September 1916). Available at: https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/archives/shackleton/articles/1537_2,32,15.html.
- 13 See <https://makingscience.royalsociety.org/s/rs/people/fst00000549>. Priestley was paraphrasing a line from the preface to Apsley Cherry-Garrard's first-hand account of Scott's expedition, *The Worst Journey in the World* (London: Vintage, 2010 [1922]).

What exactly is it that good leaders do to enable their teams to succeed?

How do they think? What do findings from neuroscience teach us about effective leadership?

Leader explores and answers these crucial questions.

In this wide-ranging book, Katy Granville-Chapman and Emmie Bidston eloquently combine up-to-date research in psychology and neuroscience with inspiring examples of success to show that leadership can be learned and that it is all about looking after your people.

They take you on a journey to meet a diverse selection of great leaders from multiple spheres – from the sports field to the corporate world – and talk you through the process by which effective leaders have become great leaders. The secret lies in mastering three key principles: know your people, love your people, inspire your people.

These three principles form the core of the book, which also provides a range of practical activities designed to help you reflect on your own and your team's progress and performance.

Suitable for both aspiring and established leaders looking to help their teams flourish.

Katy Granville-Chapman served in the British Army as both a troop commander and an education officer, a role in which she set up the education provision for British soldiers in Iraq and delivered leadership training to them. Katy is now a deputy head teacher and the co-founder of a global leadership programme which has participants in 102 countries. Katy has advised – among others – David Cameron's government, the Department for Education, England Rugby and the Cabinet Office on leadership.

After graduating from the University of Cambridge with a degree in economics – and before going into teaching – **Emmie Bidston** worked developing policies for the government in Westminster, in a range of areas from education to contingency planning. She is currently head of economics at Wellington College and director of the Wellington Leadership and Coaching Institute. She co-founded a charity to help develop young leaders in Africa and runs conferences, coaching and leadership training for adults and young people.



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