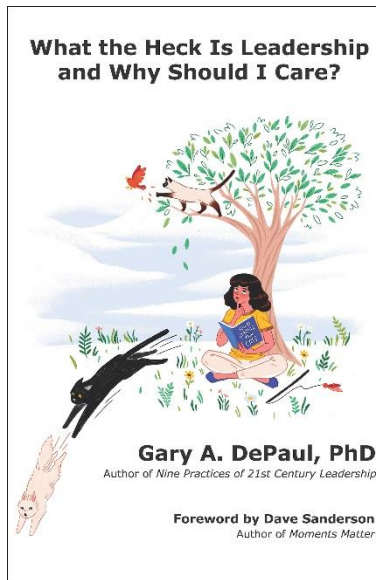


Description, Background, and Message from the Author

What the Heck Is Leadership and Why Should I Care?

By Gary A. DePaul, PhD



Description

Successful professionals have learned that investing in themselves is the most effective way to enable the extraordinary. Whether managing a team, mentoring others, or running businesses, they know that leadership is a key investment.

But what is leadership? How does it help? Through narratives about his corporate experiences, Gary DePaul guides you to discover what leadership is and why it's important. DePaul using a unique informal writing style to explain how leadership has radically changed in the 21st century, why experts fail to explain how management differs, and what the key principles are that enable people to lead at any career level.

Supported by his subtle humor and the aid of illustrations, DePaul discusses how diversity and inclusion intersect with leadership.

Background

As implied by the title, *What the Heck* describes what leadership is and why it's crucial. In it, you'll find how management and leadership differ, seven principles that guide leadership practice, and faulty and traditional leadership assumptions.

As you read, you'll discover there are no tables, figures, bullet points (but with one exception), chapter summaries, appendices, bibliography, or famous leadership quotations. You will find a wealth of narratives that illustrate how successful professionals practice leadership or how professionals fall short.

Speaking of illustrations... Each chapter begins with a cartoon of a young adult with her cats. The intent is to clue readers for what they may uncover when reading a chapter. If you search Amazon for leadership books that have something similar, the closest you may find is a book about someone moving cheese or penguins dealing with melting icebergs.

For much of the book, the author uses an induction writing style in which a chapter may begin with a story or two, then reveals the key point, and then ends with another story. Chapter titles are cryptic and may not make sense until reading the chapter's key point.

The writing style is informal, and the author leverages humor throughout, and the illustrations contribute to this by design.

Partly because it's his style, the author uses humor as a strategy. Some of the stories are serious and challenging, but the intent of humor is to release some of that and to help readers take a step back, not take themselves so seriously, and be open-minded to the challenges. Humor, though, is not meant to trivialize the real societal threats, such as the killing of George Floyd, but this strategy may help readers not to retreat from the crucial messages.

From the Author

In my first book, *Nine Practices of 21st Century Leadership*, I write extensively about how leadership is radically changing from traditional thinking. While this is an excellent book for academics and those seriously wanting to learn about leadership, business executives have asked for something more concise and personal. That is what motivated me to write *What the Heck*.

In *What the Heck*, you'll notice the complete absence of figures, tables, headings, subheadings, chapter summaries, appendices, and leadership quotations. With one exception, I managed to avoid bullet lists. What you will find are rich stories from my corporate career that I tie to leadership principles. These principles act as a moral compass for leading.

These stories illustrate what exceptional professionals do, or in some instances, don't do.

Aside from leadership stories, I explain what leadership is and why it has nothing to do with management. If you plan to watch videos of experts who explain how leadership and management differ, don't bother. The ones I've watched get it wrong. In the book, I even call out one such expert whom I respect considerably.

Here's a critical point: If you've read the most popular leadership books, you'll learn a great deal about who you are and how you can influence those around you positively. What isn't discussed overtly enough is the critical role of morality in leadership. In *What the Heck*, I write about morality and leadership. For example, in Chapter 7, I portray the murder of George Floyd as an example of a moral awakening that has changed corporate conversations and triggered the outcry of CEOs.

One last comment: You may have noticed that the cover doesn't look like the typical business or leadership book. When you open the book, you'll find a black and white illustration at the beginning of the chapters. These illustrations hint at the content. I wanted something different, and I think I achieved that (or hope I did).

Please enjoy.