

Perception-shifting TED Talks on Leadership



This is by no means an exhaustive view or even a scientifically ranked TED Talks leadership top. It's a collection of insightful talks, drawing parallels from various fields, that have the surprise element able to shift your thinking.

Leaders Are Original Thinkers: Adam Grant - The Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers

Adam Grant is the youngest tenured and most highly rated professor at Wharton School. But he missed the chance of investing in Warby Parker. So, frustrated how he couldn't see that opportunity and those two founding guys did, he set out to learn what characterizes most creative people. Here's what he found out:

3 key ideas:

- **Originals are late at the party.** Originals are procrastinators. By procrastinating, you get the time to let the problem simmer at the back of your mind, at the subconscious level. That's how you get ideas. Procrastinating is a vice when it comes to productivity, but it can be a virtue for creativity.
- **Originals have doubts and fears.** Originals have lots of doubts. But the trick is to be persistent, push through your fear and look for better solutions. A funny stat: Firefox and Chrome users are much more creative than Safari or Internet Explorer users. Think you know why? Check out the talk.
- **Originals test a lot of ideas.** You need a lot of bad ideas in order to have a few good ones. Sensible advice but amazingly, not that widespread.

If you are curious how you rate on originality, take out this [HBR quiz](#) based on Grant's work. Also, if you want to learn more, Adam Grant's latest book - [Originals](#) was published this February.

Leaders Have a Why: Simon Sinek - How Great Leaders Inspire Action (the 3rd most watched talk on TED).

A simple, concise framework that even a 4 year old would understand: to really achieve something , to inspire others, you have to have a purpose beyond making a profit. Everybody knows it a company is here to make a

profit, but why are you building computers instead of farming land? What's your "why"?

Or, as I liked to ask clients when developing employer branding projects - "How would you explain to your kid why you go to work?"

Simon Sinek is an author and a speaker. He has commented for [The New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Houston Chronicle](#), [FastCompany](#), [CMO Magazine](#), [NPR](#), and [BusinessWeek](#), and is a regular contributor to [The Huffington Post](#) and [BrandWeek](#).

Leaders Are Silent Persuaders: Itay Talgam - Lead Like The Great Conductors

This talk is really difficult to summarize since it's about orchestra conductors and the way they manage to create the perfect tune out of several dozen instruments without a single word. So you'll have to watch it fully to really get the insight.

Still, even conductors have their habits that create this "silent" leadership. And it boils down to:

- Culture: Leaders spread happiness and positivity, they are not happy to appear amused, but to enable other people stories to be heard.
- Meaning: The meaning of a piece is clearly seen on the conductor's face - a loose translation for a leader is that what he is seen doing, not what he says he's doing. This reminds me of Andy Grove's quote in *Only The Paranoid Survive* - if you want to know what is important to a leader, see how he or she spends his time, is it on strategic meetings or just rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic?
- Process: Though not obvious, a process still exists. By waiving the hands the conductor is almost saying - here's your playground, you are free to add another layer of interpretation.
- Autonomy: Conductor Herbert von Karajan "Yes, the worst damage I can do to my orchestra is to give them a clear instruction. Because that would prevent the ensemble, the listening to each other, that is needed for an orchestra."

Itay Talgam finds metaphors for organizational behavior -- and models for inspired leadership -- within the workings of the symphony orchestra. Imagining music as a model for all spheres of human creativity, from the classroom to the boardroom. Before, Talgam conducted music, including numerous orchestras in Europe. He was the first Israeli conductor to perform with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra and the Leipzig Opera house. His book, [The Ignorant Maestro](#), was published in 2015.

Being a Leader Can Be Planned: Drew Dudley - The Leadership Game

Drew Dudley has a simple, clear point of view: leadership is something you plan for as good as you plan for your next financial year. Leadership is not something you hope to be one day, but something you live every day. Leadership does not happen at some designated time, but every time when you make a decision - which is mostly every hour of your working life and personal life.

Keeping tabs on your leadership plan, is often as simple as asking a few questions every night. And keeping these questions at the back of your mind whole day long. It takes practice, but after around 30 days, it will become your second nature.

1. **Impact** - What have I done today to recognise somebody's leadership?

2. **Continuous Improvement** - What have I done to make it more likely I will learn something?
3. **Mentorship** - What have I done to make it more likely someone else will learn something?
4. **Empowerment** - What positive thing have I said about someone to their face today?
5. **Recognition** - What positive thing have I said about someone who isn't in the room?
6. **Self-respect** - How have I been good to myself today?

Drew Dudley is a Leadership Coordinator at the University of Toronto and founder of Nuance Leadership Development Services, a company that creates leadership curricula for communities, organizations and individuals.

TL;DR: If you don't have the time to watch all videos, just think and share with us this: what 3 questions will you make a habit of asking yourself daily?