

Fresh Insight

for holistic small group ministries

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Leadership: The Determining Factor

An article every leader should read...

By Dave Earley (an excerpt from his new book, *Small Group Leader's Toolkit*)

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"Everything rises and falls on leadership"

- Lee Roberson

Several years ago I was dissatisfied with my church, my small group, my marriage, and my children. So, being the spiritual giant I am, I asked God to change *them*.

God's response was swift and clear. He said and did absolutely nothing.

So I again asked the Lord to change them. Again, He said and did nothing.

Then I asked a third time for the Lord to change them. This time, His response was unmistakable: "The one who needs to change is *you*."

He was right. I had little or no control over others. The only one I really had the power to change was myself. So, I invested two years studying everything I could find related to leadership and worked hard to become a better leader.

Everything does rise and fall on one's leadership ability. As I became a better leader, my small group grew and multiplied. My church multiplied leaders and set attendance records. My marriage improved. My children also stepped up to reach their potential.

In this book, I want to give you the basic leadership principles and tools needed to become a better

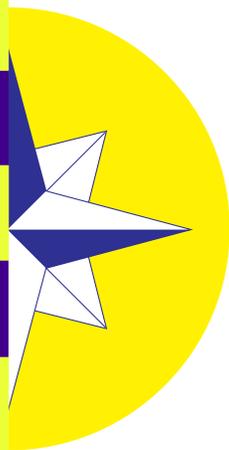
small group leader. You can also apply them to any other ministry in which you are involved or your business or family. These leadership principles are simple, practical, and powerful tools that will help you become a better leader in any relationship or setting.

Before you dive into this toolkit of leadership, I want to discuss seven reasons why developing your leadership skills is vitally important.

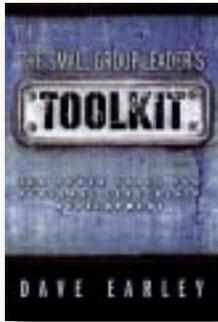
The single greatest hinderance to ministry growth is the lack of true leadership.

The greatest strength a ministry possesses is not money, space, evangelism, or resources. It is leadership. The greatest problem a ministry faces is not money, space, evangelism, absenteeism, or resources either. It's leadership! All other factors being equal, leadership ability will determine the *size* of your ministry, the *quality* of people in your ministry, the *number* of leaders within your ministry, the *morale* of your ministry, the potential *growth* of your ministry, and the long term *impact* of your ministry.

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Featured Resource



Do you use “8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders” in your leadership training? Then you’re gonna love this new book by Dave Earley!

The Small Group Leader’s Toolkit
Ten Power Tools for Personal Leadership Development
Published by TOUCH Publications

Harness the power of Dave Earley’s leadership tools to turn your small group into a life-changing experience for everyone involved . . . including you, the leader! In this easy-to-read guide, you’ll learn about ten practices or disciplines that every successful small group leader employs:

**Prayer • Personal Integrity
Passion • Purpose • Priorities
Planning • People Skills
Persuasion • People Development
• Partnership**

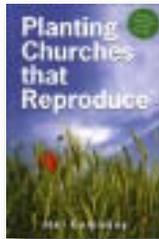
Each chapter explores the reasons why each tool is vital, how to overcome personal roadblocks you may have experienced in the past, and how to successfully integrate the tool into your ministry. To make it even easier to use each tool, Dave has included helpful personal worksheets which contain unique, industrial-strength exercises not found in other resources. If you enjoyed Dave’s previous book, “8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders” you will love this book too!

[Click here to check out a free sample chapter!](#)

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In Review



Planting Churches that Reproduce

by Joel Comiskey
CCS Publishing
204 pages

(Available through TOUCH by clicking on the picture of the book)

Randall’s Review: ◆◆◆◆
(4 stars out of 4)

Ah! What a breath of fresh air in a publishing world full of programmic methods! This new book by Joel Comiskey does an excellent job explaining what it takes to plant a cell-based church that multiplies itself over and over and over instead of growing large. He uses the analogy of a starfish. Take a leg off and it grows back while the removed leg grows into another whole starfish over time.

Another thing I loved about this book is that Comiskey mandates a simple form of church life, which is far easier to grasp and achieve for a budding church planter like myself. You see, I’d love to plant a church one day, but I have no desire to stand in a pulpit and preach my heart out every week to people sitting in rows. I want to lead a group of believers into a passionate pursuit of highly relational kingdom building. This book rang my bell!

Who’s the target reader? It’s clear that the author has two types of people in mind: the potential church planter like myself, and the pastor of a church who should allow a leg to break off and start a simple church plant instead of growing bigger. If either one of these describes you, this is a four-star read.

I highly recommend this book because Joel sees the cell group as the *ekklesia*, not another supportive church program.

More info on some reviews can be found at: www.randallneighbour.com



Sticky Church

by Larry Osborne
Zondervan Publishing
200 pages

Randall’s Review:
◆◆◆◆ (1 stars out of 4)

The author’s writing style is excellent. It’s also obvious that when Osborne preaches, he sees hundreds of small groups gathering for worship and instruction from God’s Word: he’s there to support the groups. I also enjoyed that his small group members apply the sermon in their groups each week by sharing answers to homework questions. But that’s all I like about this book.

The author literally writes off the cell movement in the latter section of the book. He just doesn’t understand that the cell is church and they should be doing more than making scriptural application. Basically, his small group model is designed to retain visitors and members of his mega church.



Activate

by Nelson Searcy & Kerrick Thomas
Regal Publishing
224 pages

Randall’s Review:
◆◆◆◆ (0 stars out of 4)

This book is subtitled, “An entirely new approach to small groups.” All I read was a detailed assimilation strategy that is highly programmic in nature [yawn]. It covers all the bases and ensures nothing will bite you when you try their method. However, you will end up with a high-maintenance small group *program* that has no grassroots conversion growth or personal responsibility for discipling others.

In fact, reading this book might just be the worst thing you ever tried to do to build a healthy, organically grown ministry of holistic and healthy small groups.

Tired of using Facebook to connect with your leaders?
Connect through Small Group Friends, a free web site created just for small groups!



What is Small Group Friends?

It's a free web site designed for small group pastors, leaders and group members.

How will it help me?

The site is an excellent place to discuss what's working in small group ministry and gain ideas. You can blog, use the forums, upload documents and forms for your leaders, all free of charge. Your small groups will have an online place to privately post prayer requests and keep a group calendar.

What about privacy?

When you join, you'll see that the site gives you control over who sees what in your own profile and the online groups you establish.

Is it really free, or is this an introductory offer?

It really is free. Forever. So there's no reason not to try it out. It's a great way to connect pastors to leaders, leaders to members, and to others around the world committed to doing church in biblical communities!

www.smallgroupfriends.com

The fun, free way to connect with your small group members and leaders

2009 Cell Church Symposium

WACO, TEXAS - JUNE 23-25, 2009

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DION ROBERT, Pastor, Works & Missions, Ivory Coast

JIMMY SEIBERT, Pastor, Antioch Church, Waco, Tx

BILL SMITH, Church Consultant, Washington, D.C.

MARIO VEGA, Pastor, Elim, El Salvador

ROBERT LAY, Director, Ministeria Igreja Em Celulas, Brazil

Workshop Speakers:



WILLIAM A. BECKHAM, Touch Global International Ministries

JAMES LASSITER, CWMI Staff

JOEL COMISKEY, Author/Cell Church Consultant and Church Planter

ROSE LEO, AbbaLove, Jakarta, Indonesia

RALPH W. NEIGHBOUR, Author, Church Planter, and Adjunct Professor, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

RANDALL NEIGHBOUR, President, TOUCH Outreach Ministries, Houston, TX

DENNIS WATSON, Pastor, Celebration Church, New Orleans, LA

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Ten Things Every Small Group Leader Should Know. Spread the word!

There are *a lot* of things a cell leader or small group leader needs to know, but this short list boils everything down to the most vital stuff a leader needs to succeed. If you like what you read, pass it on or use it any way you like!

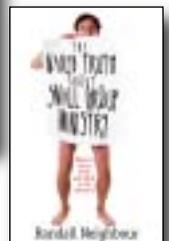
- 1. Embrace God's unconditional love.** If you don't "know that you know" and you're at peace with your relationship with God and more importantly, his relationship with you, you will not be able to love others unconditionally. Petition him to show you how much he loves you and he will be happy to do it. He's just that kind of Pappa!
- 2. Maintain a clear and compelling personal vision** for your group as a whole as well as the individual members of your group. This will help you make decisions when things get fuzzy and remind you of why you are doing what you're doing when things get tough (and they will!).
- 3. Small group leadership is more about friendship than any other single component.** If you invest in the lives of your members and invite them to invest in you, you'll impact people in ways they will never forget.
- 4. You are not supposed to carry the weight of your group.** Excellent small group leaders involve others in planning and execution in every aspect of the biblical community... meetings, outreach events, social activities, ministry time in the group, ministry and servanthood outside the meeting, etc.
- 5. Focus on Christ in your midst to experience his presence, power, and purposes for your lives when you come together.** During worship, invite each person to give up his or her personal agenda to receive ministry, offer ministry, do the talking, remain silent, etc. When we gather in his name and expect him to do powerful things in our midst in which we will follow, the meeting becomes transformational for those in attendance.
- 6. Be a disciple, (not just a convert).** Converts know God saved them and expect to be spoon-fed regularly for sustenance. Disciples have taken personal responsibility for their spiritual maturity and feel themselves with prayer, digging into the Word, fasting, and reading books that help them become a better disciple and more importantly a disciple-maker.
- 7. Your mental model as a small group leader should be the same as a parent.** Actively raise your members so they want to grow in maturity, move out of the house,

start a family of their own, and give you a bunch of spiritual grand babies! Small group leadership is all about developing a *legacy* ... tell your group this is your end-goal in life with them. Rinse and repeat often because they'll forget!

- 8. Focus on the 6 days and 22 hours between meetings.** That's where the real ministry and personal transformation occurs. Leaders always focus on the meeting because it's where their position is viewed most publicly. However, if you invest in your members between meetings then everyone feels more comfortable in the meeting and they'll share openly.
- 9. Reaching people for Christ requires bi-directional servanthood and cross-pollination.** For people to see you as a genuine friend, you must ask them to help you and serve you as well as serving them. Additionally, you must involve your unbelieving friends in the activities and lives of other members of your group to win them to Christ and actually disciple them. It takes a village to reach someone for Jesus and support them as they embrace Lordship!
- 10. You cannot do the next cool thing God wants to do with you until you give away what you're currently doing.** Who could you develop to take over your group so you can start another group, assume the role of a coach, take a staff position, or plant a church? This may seem scary right now, but that's because you haven't given away what you're doing. As soon as you do, you'll see your spiritual future (your next step) in a very exciting way. Trust me on this one!

As stated in the introduction, facilitating a small group gathering and leading a dozen people into spiritual maturity requires a lot of knowledge and skill. However, you don't need a lot more than what's been presented here to be *amazingly* successful. Just embrace these ten principles or practices of small group leadership and watch yourself and your group grow like a weed!

RANDALL NEIGHBOUR is the president of TOUCH Outreach Ministries. His new book, *The Naked Truth about Small Group Ministry* will be available this fall. Check out his blog at www.randallneighbour.com



Ministry News

2008 has been an interesting year for “the little old ministry from Texas”

Training

In March, we held a free two-day pastor's conference here in Houston and only had a half-dozen show up. This made us wonder if the interest in transitioning to cell-based ministry was waning. However, the October conference, covering the same material was standing room only! So, we've decided to release the [Making Cell Groups Work](#) conference audio and syllabus for sale through our web site in January. If you didn't make it to one of our events, this will be a low-cost way to get the material without travel and lodging expenses.

Travel

The trip to Malawi in May was life-changing. The pastors were so appreciative of the training they received! We believe they now have the basic knowledge they need to train leaders and expand what they've done in the past. However, we still need donations to print leadership training and discipleship books in the Chewa language. We've successfully translated nearly ten titles, but need US\$6,000 to print what has been translated thus far. If God leads you or your church to donate to this very worthy cause, contact our offices at 800-735-5865 to make your tax-deductible gift to this endeavor. (No donation monies are held back for administrative costs. 100% goes to the project! Plus, the books will be sold for a few pennies per copy to ensure the Malawians receiving them value what they've been given. It's a solid way to increase the kingdom of God in a place where every piece of Christian literature is considered a treasured possession.)

Resources

God continues to bless TOUCH with excellent authors and new resources to offer you! This year, we released two new curriculum books in the Community Life Series, [Launch](#) (Michael Mack) and [God is Powerful In You](#) (Paul Ford). Just a few days ago, we released [The Small Group Leader's Toolkit](#) (Dave Earley). And as you read this e-newsletter, we're doing the layout and design of Christ's Basic Bodies, written by the ministry's founder, Dr. Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr. This book should be out during the days after Christmas and you'll definitely want to pre-order your copy to be one of the first to receive this powerful book.

2009 and beyond

What's the future hold? New training for stagnant small group ministries and resources to move consumer Christians out of the pews and into ministry. We're also working with authors to create pre/post-Encounter God weekend curriculum for groups, and a pastor's resource called "Huddle!" (help for your monthly meetings).

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Leadership ability determines the size of a person's ministry.

When I read Jesus' parables, I find God gives more to those who have shown the ability to be trusted with more. Our wise and benevolent God will not increase or expand a person's ministry if he or she is not doing a good job loving and serving the few He has already given.

Leadership ability determines the quality of people in a person's ministry.

I have a friend who is a quality leader. She works hard and her ministry has doubled in the last two months. The number of leaders serving under her has grown from none to four.

Despite her success, she is frustrated with the man who serves as the head of her ministry. Every time we visit, she shares comments like, "Dave, I just don't understand. Why can't he see this?" "Why doesn't he do that?" and "I don't want his job, but I can't understand why he won't do it!" She is wrestling with the decision quality leaders always face when they serve under less developed leaders: "Do I just focus on my ministry and let the rest of this ministry suffer, do I talk to his superior, or do I find another ministry?"

If her boss does not step up and do a better job of leading, he will lose her. Quality leaders are attracted by serving those more developed than themselves, but *repelled* by serving leaders of a lower caliber.

Leadership ability determines the number of leaders in a person's ministry.

Leaders who consistently multiply their groups attract and develop new leaders constantly. If you struggle to find anyone to train so you can multiply your small group, it could be you have not attracted any leaders to your group.

Leadership ability determines the morale of a person's ministry.

I currently serve at a seminary that struggled to attract students. A few years ago, we appointed a new leader with the tools and temperament needed to thrive in our setting. The morale of the faculty and staff shifted dramatically. Then, student enrollment numbers took off.

When a leader with abilities is at the helm, morale remains high and it makes all the difference in the world.

Leadership ability determines the long term

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Continued from page 5

impact of one's ministry.

Let me give you an example from church history. George and John were contemporaries who both had great results preaching the gospel. Their messages shook two continents for Christ.

Everyone agreed that one was the better preacher, yet he was not much of a leader. The other was considered adequate in the pulpit, but was an exceptional leader.

Few people outside of a seminary have ever heard of the preacher named George Whitefield. However, John Wesley's ministry lives on through the ministry he established. Today there are 70 million Methodists who trace their roots back to Wesley's leadership!

If you attempt to lead a small group without these vital power tools, needless fear and frustration, pain, and problems will arise.

Leadership ability allows a person's ministry to multiply.

I will never forget a display I saw at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago years ago. It featured a checkerboard with 1 grain of wheat on the first, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, then 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, etc. Somewhere down the board, there were so many grains of wheat on the square that some were spilling over into neighboring squares . . . and there, the demonstration stopped. Above the checkerboard display was a question, "At this rate of doubling every square, how much grain would be on the checkerboards by the 64th square?"

To find the answer to the riddle, I pressed a button on a console and the answer flashed on a little screen above the board: "Enough

to cover the entire subcontinent of India 50 feet deep."

Never underestimate the power of multiplication.

The slow process of raising up multiplying leaders is the fastest way to fulfill the Great Commission. In fact, it is the only way. The world is growing by multiplication and the church is growing through addition. In order

to catch up and keep pace with the multiplying population of the world, you must multiply multipliers.

In other words, it takes a leader to make a leader who makes other leaders.

Before you can multiply leaders from your small group or your church, you must become a leader who strategically creates a legacy.

Leadership ability enhances a person's ability to handle changing and challenging times.

No generation in history has been forced to navigate the levels and speed of change found in the world today. Leaders who navigate change successfully enjoy an exciting ministry full of growth. In fact, there is no growth without change. If a ministry hopes to grow, it must be confidently prepared to change. All over North America, church leaders have discovered that the church must change or die. Yet many crash on the rocks of under-led change.

In order to lead your small group through change effectively, you must become a leader who employs the power tools

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described in this book. If you attempt to lead without them, needless fear and frustration, pain, and problems will arise.

God is Looking For Leaders.

In His infinite wisdom, God has chosen to implement His ministry on earth through you and me. He does not have to use us, but that is the path He has selected.

This means that God is always on the lookout for leaders. His desire is to find them and get fully behind them, as He told King Asa:

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9)

When people refuse to allow God to lead them, he removes His blessing. Read the blood-curdling words He gave King Saul:

But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command. (1 Samuel 13:14)

Read what God said to Ezekiel:

I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. (Ezek. 22: 30)

That verse is one of the saddest in the Bible. Because of a lack of leadership, a nation was destroyed. But it is also one of the most encouraging statements ever made. If there had been a leader, a nation would have survived. One leader *can* make a big difference. You have what it takes to be that leader!

A man was once asked if any great leaders were born in his home town. He replied, "No, just babies."

Kingdom business is the most important business.

One of my friends is a pilot for United Airlines. Twice a year he receives two weeks of intense training. That's four weeks a year, or 160 hours of training. Why? Untrained pilots put hundreds of people at risk and will quickly become bad for business.

Let me ask you a question. If a

Quality leaders are attracted to a ministry by serving those more developed than themselves.

pilot is required to receive extensive training to sharpen his skills because he holds physical lives, how much more should you receive training to develop your skills? When you lead a small group, you hold eternal souls in your hands! Kingdom business is the most important business on earth.

It is more difficult to lead unpaid volunteers vs. paid employees.

In many ways, church leadership is more difficult than secular leadership. One cannot motivate a volunteer with a pay raise or the threat of a pay cut. Church leaders not only need to

be as good as secular leaders; they need to be better! The ten power tools described in [The Small Group Leader's Toolkit](#) will help you lead, love, motivate, train, and release others. With hard work and dedication, you will help unpaid volunteers become passionate ministry leaders.

Leadership can be learned and developed.

A man was once asked if any great leaders were born in his hometown. He replied, "No, just babies."

Leaders are made, not born. While it is true that a few people possess the natural abilities, intelligence, background, or training to be a 10 out of 10 on a leadership scale, everyone has room for improvement. You may not jump from 2 to a 10 by simply reading this book. But you could go from a 2 to a 5 or from a 5 to 7, which will make a huge difference in your ministry. As a spiritual leader, every step up the scale you make increases your impact for God exponentially. Employ what you find in this book and watch your ministry as a small group leader flourish with growth!

DR. DAVE EARLEY is the author of numerous books on small group leadership, including his newest release, *The Small Group Leader's Toolkit*. This article was taken from this new release. To purchase this book, click on the book cover to the right!



If you would like to interact with Dave, check out his web site by clicking on his picture!

