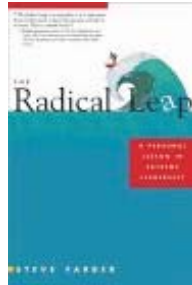




# The Radical Leap

A Personal Lesson in Extreme Leadership



**Author:** Steve Farber

**Publisher:** Dearborn Trade Publishing

**Date of Publication:** 2004

**ISBN:** 1891984993

**Number of Pages:** 192 pages

## About the Author



Steve Farber

**Steve Farber** is President of **Extreme Leadership, Inc.** an organization devoted to changing the world through the cultivation and development of Extreme Leaders in the business community. Farber joined the Tom Peters Company in 1994 as their first full-time staff consultant. He quickly became their most requested consultant and speaker and was given the title of Vice President and Official Mouthpiece. Steve left TPC in November of 2000 to establish Extreme Leadership, Inc., and in June of 2001 his former employer honored him with the designation of Tom Peters Company Fellow.

Steve has worked with *Agilent Technologies, the American Medical Association, Charles Schwab Company, Clorox, Consumers Energy, Ford Motor Company, Ikon Office Solutions, Intel, KLA-Tenor, Lawrence Livermore Labs, Lockheed Martin, Oral-B Laboratories, The Panama Canal Commission, Pier One, the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP), the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), Sun Microsystems, 3M, and Walt Disney Imagineering* among many others.

Before his tenure at the Tom Peters Company, Steve was with *TMI North America* where he served as a consultant, Program Leader, and the Director of Service Programs. He developed his management and marketing skills, as well as his love for consulting and speaking, as *President of Independence Financial Group, Inc.*, a financial brokerage firm. Steve is the author of the audio series, **Extreme Leadership: In Pursuit of the OSIM**. He is a contributor to the business anthology, *Leading Authorities on Business: Winning Strategies From the Greatest Minds in Business Today*, and his book entitled, **The Radical Leap: A Personal Lesson in Extreme Leadership**, was published in April, 2004 by Dearborn Trade Publishing.

For more information on Steve Farber, visit his website at: <http://www.stevifarber.com>

## The Big Idea

In a business that has become overloaded with corporate buzzwords, Steve Farber finds that true leadership is best achieved by returning to basic principles that are often overlooked in the cutthroat world of business leadership. In this modern parable, he redefines leadership by asking the reader to see it as an extreme sport - hence the term "Radical Leap," an interesting acronym for its elements: Love, Energy, Audacity and Proof.

Like any sport, Radical Leadership challenges one to break free from the conventional, and makes you face your own mortality and imperfections in order to turn you into a leader people will follow to hell and back.

While some skeptics may view the LEAP as too touchy-feely and sketchy in principle, it cannot be ignored that they are principles that have inspired countless of others to follow people into wars, fanned religious flames, and built the empires of visionaries who had nothing going for them except vision and the ability to infect others with the same drive.

These principles are, in essence, the fuel that drives people to change the world.

### ■ The Extreme Leader

When Leadership is viewed as an extreme sport, anyone that practices it would be dubbed an “extreme leader”. These leaders are set apart from the posers of the industry by their willingness to take risks and make mistakes in order to lead by example.

### ■ Seeking the OS!M

Ever had the feeling, just before the big presentation or that inspirational speech, that the butterflies in your stomach were going to take you away and carry you off where you'd never be heard from again? Or worse, have you ever wanted them to?

At the precise point that you feel that, you're currently going through an “Oh, Shit! Moment.” These are the moments that scare you, thrill you to the bone. These are indicators that you're at the brink of something big, like standing at the edge of a sheer drop and feeling that if you ever get out of it alive, you'd have accomplished something worthwhile. These moments produce fear and try to trigger your sense of self-preservation, something that extreme leaders have to learn to ignore.

The extreme leaders recognize the fear, befriend it, and actively seek it out, because they believe that only in risking themselves will they be able to show their followers that their goals are worthy of such sacrifice.

### ■ Failing Fabulously

OS!M seeking makes for some pretty tense situations. Fewer and fewer leaders are willing to screw up publicly as they are afraid that they will lose face and be made a laughingstock of the company. The very idea of having your failures documented and publicly reviewed will make anyone twist uncomfortably.

However, Leadership isn't about being comfortable. After all, all leaders live under the constant scrutiny of their colleagues, their business associates, their subordinates, and their competitors. It only follows that the leaders' own actions are the most powerful tools at their disposal. When they fail or make mistakes, the extreme leaders know better than to try and keep it under wraps. They flaunt it, they call attention to themselves, they put it up on the company bulletin board. Still, it doesn't stop there. They make sure that whoever gets to see their mistakes will learn from them, adding to the database of how not to do things, and then challenge them to do it better than he or she did.

### ■ Taking the Radical LEAP

The **Radical LEAP** is an acronym for the essences that make an extreme leader:

**L** Love  
**E** Energy  
**A** Audacity  
**P** Proof

### ■ Cultivate Love

Few people really care about what they do beyond the fact that it is what gets them their paychecks. However, the extreme leader goes beyond caring - he loves what he does.

Yes, love. An extreme leader is passionately, irrevocably, head-over-heels in love with every single aspect of his job. He sees a vision worthy of pursuit and he puts everything he has into the chase.

While love is not exactly an HR-sanctioned directive, it is essential in the workplace. Everyone, rank and file and managers alike, bring their hearts to work. This makes them human.

If it's not possible to do what you love, then fall in love with what you do. Revitalize yourself with the following questions:

- What is it that I love about what I do?
- Why do I love this business, this company, this project, this procedure, this policy?
- Why do I love my customers?

Remember that there was once a time when you were idealistic and full of love for life. Remember how you felt then and remember why you do the things you do.

When it is no longer possible to find your passion in your current company, maybe it is time for you to find your passion elsewhere. Go back to the first instruction to all people who are aspiring to lead: do what you love.

### ■ Generate Energy

Energy is a natural by-product of love. When you love what you do, you suddenly become infused with the boundless energy that you need to accomplish your goals. Extreme leaders often find themselves virtual fountains of energy, which they not only generate within themselves, but spark within others as well. This energy is due to the love they have for their work and the people around them. The more love within you, the more energy you can tap into.

Energy is created when people feel enthusiastic and motivated about the task at hand. Infused with this energy, employees want to come to work each day, want to push themselves that extra mile for the best results possible, and actually want what

is best for the company. Without it, an organization would be nothing more than a group of listless people trying to get through another day with no purpose or reason other than to have it over and done with.

It is essential for extreme leaders to be able to give the people around them the energy they will need to go against difficulties and to provide the motivation. How does a leader do this? By providing a rousing vision. Most companies would have their Vision Statement written down in calligraphy in their hallways, or emblazoned in the company handbook but it's rare that the employees, or even management, know it by heart, much less live it.

Why? Because most companies, and most managers, miss the point completely. Vision is something you communicate, but not with paper and pen.

Extreme leaders communicate the vision they have in their hearts by becoming a living example of a company's policy. They become the vision so plainly that anyone could see what the future held for them.

Whenever they address employees, extreme leaders make sure to connect on a human level. They don't use big words or fancy labels, neither do they hide behind their titles. They simply talk to their audience, in terms that the audience understands, about what they hope to accomplish, what they want to do, and how they're going to do it. They put themselves in a vulnerable position and allow people to see the human side of them.

This connection, if attained, could be electric. This kind of energy, the kind you get from seeing a living, breathing vision telling you that you are important to the achievement of company goals, can sustain a person throughout his or her whole professional career. Extreme leaders know this and make sure that every person around them knows that he or she is a vital part of achieving success - giving them the feeling of working for a cause and not just a paycheck.

What's more, extreme leaders set LEAP goals as part of their vision. LEAP goals are challenging, non-conventional standards that often push the envelope in an industry. These goals require you to feel energetic and invigorated by the essence of challenges and never make you feel that they are insurmountable. These goals tap into the hopes and dreams of the team through the individual and the people generate the energy to meet these goals.

### ■ Inspire Audacity

If you've ever heard Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and been touched by it, you know what true audacity means. Here was a man who belonged to a minority, who was from a race traditionally oppressed, that had the guts to declare on national television that he was going to win freedom and equality back for his people. Many people were shocked and appalled. Many went against him. He didn't care. He loved his people too much.

Love for something demands that we try anything for that love. When you're in love with a person, you promise them the whole world. In business, when you're in love

with your work, you desire to change the whole world. Extreme leaders will have nothing less.

Audacity is having the gall to go against all the “normal constraints” to bring home extraordinary results. It is deliberately ignoring all the people who say that something cannot be done for whatever reason and going ahead and trying to do it. It is believing in all things noble and good, and setting out to share them with the world.

Love-inspired audacity is never used to serve one's own ego but to serve the greater good. It is impossible to become an extreme leader, Farber states, without having one question in the center of your agenda: “How are we going to change the world”? When you realize that the world is made up of the people around you and orbits in ever-widening circles, the obvious answer is to start where you are - in your world.

### ■ Provide Proof

The true challenge of extreme leadership is the follow-through. Having all of the above without tangible efforts amounts to nothing. There are three levels of proof:

- **First Level: Prove it to others**  
Extreme leaders do whatever they say they will do. Carry out your promises of action. You cannot lead and flake out on your followers at the same time. People are relying on you to follow through on what you say and ultimately, this will either kill or strengthen their faith in you.
- **Second Level: Prove it to yourself**  
As mentioned before, the OS!M is an indicator that you're doing something worth doing. Pursue it actively and take time to really feel that moment. Keep track of how many OS!Ms you pursued recently and be glad that you did. Remember that it is not fear for fear's sake but a sign of growth, a sign that you're moving in the right direction.
- **Third Level: Prove it to others that you're proving it to yourself**  
Extreme leadership is, as it turns out, a team sport.

It has been said time and time again that the essence of leadership is to develop people. However, leaders sometimes miss the fact that one of the best ways to develop people is to allow them to have a hand in your own development. Allow them to watch you do what you do. Allow them to see how you pursue your goals and your OS!Ms with the same vigor.

Finally, ask your people for extreme feedback. Tell them to be honest with you and to hold nothing back if they feel that their feedback will be beneficial to your cause. This will show them that you not only value their work and their inputs on the job but you also value their inputs to your own personal leadership development.

When you prove to others that you are proving it to yourself, they will want to try too. You would have ignited the flame of several other potential extreme leaders by being

a living, breathing example.

### ■ Final Word

Farber tells a touching story of how a man rekindled his passion for his work through a mysterious mentor who helps him do the same for a colleague. We follow his initially cynical character as he unravels his mentor's secrets and comes to grips with the truth that leadership isn't all that complicated after all. All it takes is to leap, headfirst.

From an industry where people have become so jaded, the Radical Leap presents us with what seems to be an idealistic, and sometimes uncannily unrealistic, approach to leadership. It tells us that a return to the basics of leadership is in order—a return to relating to each other as people. It may sound odd in the age of impersonality and the harassment suits, but the more you look at it, the more it makes sense.

Farber stresses again and again how important love is in the process of leadership. It's all about loving the people around you, loving the process, taking a risk and trusting that the combination of all these will get you where you want to go. It is one wild ride, and the results are spectacular.

If you've ever dreamed of making a difference in this world, this book is for you.