



Leaders, Fools and Impostors: Essays on the Psychology of Leadership

Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries

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In this book of insightful essays, Kets de Vries explodes the myth that rationality is what governs the behavior of leaders and followers, and he provides a more realistic perspective on organizational functioning and the leader-follower relationship. The author shows that a great potential for distortion exists when leaders try to act out the fantasies of their followers, and explores the many psychological traps into which leaders frequently fall. Citing examples from business, history, literature, the arts, and from his own psychoanalytic and management-consulting practise, the author identifies distinct leader types. He describes, for instance, the narcissist whose drive for power and prestige can bring much-needed vitality to an organization, but whose inability to accept criticism ultimately creates a climate of subservience. He shows that entrepreneurs possess many of the qualities of the impostor, including a capacity for self-dramatization and a deep understanding of how to profit by others' wishes and desires, and he explains why entrepreneurs sometimes distort the truth about themselves and their organizations. Through numerous case studies of successful and failed leaders, Leaders, Fools, and Impostors furthers a better understanding of the leader-follower dynamic, and gives leaders the means to transform themselves.

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