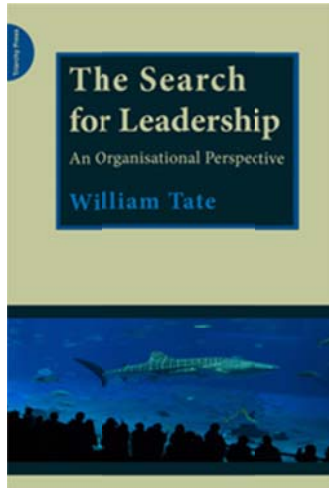


book review by john varney

search for leadership

william tate – triarchy press



William Tate is an OD and HR specialist with very extensive experience of leadership from positions he has held within organisations and also as an independent consultant. His first-hand experience and enquiring mind enable him to bring deep insight to bear in this valuable book.

The key idea is that leadership is not a personal attribute (Farewell all that 'great leader' teaching of the 20th century – the search for attributes and how to develop them - and all the disappointment that followed in its wake!). More important than the change of emphasis is the change of thinking this implies.

If leadership is systemic then how do we participate in it?

Not only does Tate explore this idea thoroughly but he brings in other factors that are often overlooked, particularly the role of the shadow. He expresses various aspects of the shift in thinking that we need; from managing to leading; from individual leader to systemic leadership.

He shows how most leadership development is based on the false premise that leadership is a personal attribute, which gives the false expectation that developing leadership skills will produce organisational benefits.

He critiques most aspects of the prevailing thinking about leadership in organisations and finds it largely locked in the past. If we are to handle the complexity of the 21st century way of organising, he argues, we need a new understanding of the nature of leadership – indeed a new kind of leadership for the 21st century. This is Systemic Leadership.

The book is copiously illuminated with case material, anecdotes and topical illustrations.

John Varney helps organisations with strategy innovation and cultural change. As facilitator and coach, his challenge, empathy and support lift the aspirations of individuals and teams.

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