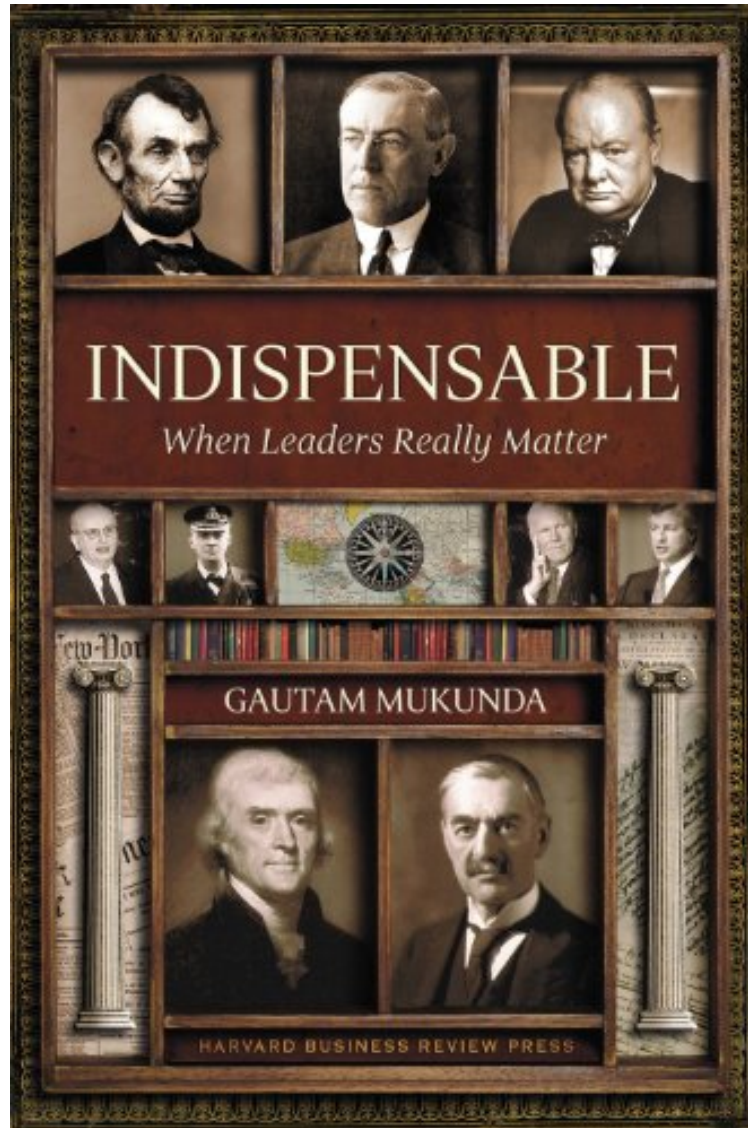


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Indispensable: When Leaders Really Matter

Gautam Mukunda

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Gautam Mukunda : Indispensable: When Leaders Really Matter before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Indispensable: When Leaders Really Matter:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Indispensable New View of Leadership By Alan L. Chase There are miles and miles of bookshelves sagging under the weight of books that discuss leadership. It is rare when a new work arrives that sheds a new and illuminating light on the topic. "Indispensable" is just such a novelty. Harvard Business School professor Gautam Mukunda has taken a case study approach to examining leaders from a variety of fields - military, government, science and business - whose actions and leadership choices have had a tremendous

impact on the organizations they have led. The author's thesis is both simple and revolutionary. He proposes that most leaders have come up through the filtering system of the organization they eventually lead. He calls these leaders in the middle of the Bell Curve "Modal Leaders." They tend to make choices that are predictable and that steer the ship which they captain in ways that produce incremental change. In contradistinction to Modal Leaders, "High-Impact Leaders" are outliers. They tend to arrive in their position of leadership having been minimally filtered through the usual vetting processes. They have the capacity to make sweeping and revolutionary changes - for good or for ill. This process of screening and filtering leadership candidates the author dubs "Leadership Filtration Process (LTP)." His theory of impactful and indispensable leadership he names "Leadership Filtration Theory (LFT)." The structure and methodology of the book is to take case studies of High-Impact Leaders who tend to be Unfiltered and Extreme, and to compare their actions with contemporaries who are Modular Leaders in order to analyze how different are the choices made by these Extreme Leaders. Early in the book, Mukunda makes the case that among the U.S. Presidents, those universally acknowledged to be among the most effective Presidents - Lincoln, FDR, Washington, Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson - were all Unfiltered candidates. At the other end of the scale, those considered the least effective - Tyler, Fillmore, Grant, G.W. Bush, Andrew Johnson, Pierce and Harding - were also unfiltered. In the following chapters, he examines in detail how these high impact leaders were chosen and how they chose to lead in a variety of crises. The rest of the book takes a deep dive into examining the cases of a variety of both Filtered and Unfiltered Leaders - including Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, Neville Chamberlain, Churchill and a smattering of business and science leaders. In wrapping up his explanation of the ramifications of LFT, Professor Mukunda prescribes situations in which Extreme Unfiltered Leaders should be considered to lead an enterprise, and situations where it would be unwise. I found myself pondering the broad personal and professional implications of this theory. As an executive recruiter, I serve a filtering function for my client companies - presenting to them the candidates for leadership that I have determined best fit the criteria and parameters the client has set. I am still processing how best to help my clients utilize the insights from Leadership Filtration Theory to determine how much of a risk to take in setting those search parameters. The author has put a lot of meat on the plate for his readers to ingest and to digest. I am grateful for the tastiness and nutritional value of this literary meal. As part of a healthy diet of reading in the field of leadership, I find this book to be "Indispensable"!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting theory well-illustrated and applied
By David M. Land
Mukunda's Leader Filtration Theory informs, but does not overwhelm the book. Never is there a moment in the book when it feels as though the author is fitting the facts to the theory. Rather, well-told stories illustrate the key points of the theory, and the theory provides a backbone for the entire book and its useful conclusions. It is not often that I get to the end of a non-fiction book and wish, as I might with a novel, that there were more. But as I read the book's final chapter explaining how to apply the theory in real-world situations, I felt that pang of the impending end.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand leadership
By Eric Barker
For a long time I'd been utterly confused by the research on leadership. There's a great deal of literature showing leaders don't matter. There are also a lot of studies (and anecdotal evidence) showing the exact opposite -- great leaders can have profound effects and be transformative. I'd pretty much given up on the subject. It didn't make any sense. Gautam Mukunda's eye-opening book resolves this dilemma and makes for fascinating reading. Some leaders *are* unimportant and interchangeable while others make strides that revolutionize or destroy the organizations they guide -- and it's not a mystery as to why or how. Backed up by mounds of data, the lessons of "Indispensable" not only explain the history of leadership but can also guide individuals and organizations to make better decisions regarding their futures. A must read.

Will your next leader be insignificant or indispensable? The importance of leadership and the impact of individual leaders has long been the subject of debate. Are they made by history, or do they make it? In *Indispensable*, Harvard Business School professor Gautam Mukunda offers an enticingly fresh look at how and when individual leaders really can make a difference. By identifying and analyzing the hidden patterns of their careers, and by exploring the systems that place these leaders in positions of power, *Indispensable* sheds new light on how we may be able to identify the best leaders and what lessons we can learn, from both the process and the result. Profiling a mix of historic and modern figures from Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln to Winston Churchill and Judah Folkman and telling the stories of how they came to power and how they made the most important decisions of their lives, *Indispensable* reveals how, when, and where a single individual in the right place at the right time can save or destroy the organization they lead, and even change the course of history. *Indispensable* will also help you understand this new model so you can use it in your own life whether you're a citizen casting a ballot, an executive choosing your next CEO, or a leader trying to make your mark.