

## **Are You Ready to Take a Radical Leap? --Steve Farber**

I recently caught up with leadership expert, Steve Farber, who is the president of Extreme Leadership Incorporated, and the founder of The Extreme Leadership Institute. In this interview, I ask Steve about his new book, the leadership elements that are captured in it, and if it's possible to make money doing what you love in a bad economy.

### **What is The Radical Leap Re-Energized and why should business leaders read it?**

*The Radical Leap Re-Energized* represents a re-launch and a re-commitment to a universal set of business/life/world-changing ideas. This new incarnation is actually my first two books, *The Radical Leap* and *The Radical Edge*, woven together into a new, expanded and rejuvenated work. Even though I originally wrote it in two separate endeavors, this full story is, in retrospect, the way it was always meant to be.

In 2009, the first version of this book, published under the title, *The Radical Leap: A Personal Lesson in Extreme Leadership*, was listed in Covert and Sattersten's *The 100 Best Business Books of All Time*—right next to Tom Peters' *In Search of Excellence* and Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner's *The Leadership Challenge*—and to say that blew my mind would rank among the 100 Biggest Understatements of All Time. I've been deeply gratified and, to be honest, more than a little surprised by the business world's warm reception to Leap. But the biggest surprises have had little to do with business, per se.

Over the short years since Leap's first publication, I've heard from principals, schoolteachers and students; pastors, rabbis and clergy people of all stripes; bloggers and social media mavens; volunteer workers and non-profit missionaries, who've reached out to me to say that the ideas and inspiration in this book have helped them excel as leaders and succeed in changing their pieces of the world for the better. So, it turns out that *The Radical Leap Re-Energized* isn't "just" a business book, after all.

### **Can you briefly explain these leadership elements that are captured in your book: Love, Energy, Audacity, and Proof?**

Love, Energy, Audacity, and Proof (LEAP) is the fundamental framework for what I refer to as Extreme Leadership. An Extreme Leader is someone who puts him or herself on the line to change their piece of the company, organization, world for the better—regardless of their position or title, regardless what is or is not happening "out there", and regardless of what other people are or are not doing to change things for the better.

Here's a quick primer on the elements of LEAP:

*Cultivate Love:* Many consider the emotion of love as out of place or simply inappropriate in the world of business—that good business people keep their hearts out of their work. But the opposite is true. It's the heart that brings the fire of creativity to bear on the day-to-day, and that inspires drive, loyalty and leaps of innovative brilliance.

Love is, in fact, the primary motivation and driving force for the Extreme Leader: love of a cause, principle, idea, product, customer, company, colleague, friend, family member, etc. Without that love, there would be no good reason to stick your neck out, would there? The Extreme Leader's ideal is: Do what you love in the service of people who love what you do.

*Generate Energy:* Energy is not abstract or metaphysical; it's real, tangible, palpable. You know when you have it and you know when you don't. Find the juice to work through the obstacles, and make it your job to generate energy in yourself and others. Do your behaviors and attitudes put energy into the people around you?

Here's a little test: do you generate more energy when you walk into a room, or when you walk out of the room? The Extreme Leader holds him or herself accountable for the quality of the work environment and for a palpable level of excitement. Ask yourself: What's exciting about the work that we really do around here? See if you can identify and articulate the real meaning and value of the work that you do. Once you have, answer this question out loud and invite others to respond. Watch what happens to the energy.

*Inspire Audacity:* Extreme Leaders exhibit a “bold and blatant disregard for normal constraints,” and inspire it in others. But this is audacity rooted in love and courage not ego and politics. In other words, it’s the audacity needed to make things better for all of us. Here’s an audacious idea: You are personally accountable for changing the world. I don’t think we can go wrong with that point of view. And if you don’t believe it, prove me wrong by acting as though it’s true. Ask (and answer out loud): How are we going to change the world of our employees, customers and marketplace?

*Provide Proof:* Ultimately, the Extreme Leader has to show proof of intent and proof of progress. Let’s not forget that the bottom line is always important in business, and that—at the end of the day—productivity and profitability tell the whole story.

Using the LEAP framework will vastly improve your numbers because it will help you to get the best out of yourself and others. To get to the bottom line, however, we have to look beyond it. First, remember to practice DWYSYWD—Do What You Say You Will Do. Make sure that your behavior is congruent with your words, and you’ll be proving to others that they can count on you. Your personal credibility depends on it. Also, prove to others that you’re taking the pursuit of Extreme Leadership seriously and not treating it as a flavor-of-the-month buzzword. To say it another way, prove to others that you’re not posing. How? Pursue the OS!M (Oh Shit! Moment). Let others learn from your hard-earned experience. Let them see you fail as well as succeed. Then ask and answer, What did I/we/you learn from that experience?

**Is it possible to love what you do and get paid for it? How do you position yourself to do so? In a bad economy, what little things can you do to increase your productivity and be more positive?**

It’s not only “possible,” it’s a requirement! Conversely, is it possible to hate your work and still make money? Of course. I’ve met more than a few wealthy people who are fundamentally miserable. But we’re talking about leadership here, and it’s virtually impossible (at least in any significant and long-lasting way) to engage, motivate, compel, or energize anyone else unless you feel it yourself, first. And love is the way to generate all of the above. I’m NOT saying you should love every aspect of your work or job. We all have things that we have to do whether we like (let alone “love”) them or not. We have a technical term for that; it’s called “being an adult.”

So here’s the key: If you DON’T like your job, your company, your boss or the people you work with, then don’t start by jumping to the conclusion that you’re in the wrong place (you may be—just don’t start there). Or if you’re feeling trapped in a job because the economy’s bad and you don’t think you have any other options, don’t let yourself fall into a downward spiral of despair. That will just suck the energy right out of you.

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Try this, instead: Find something—anything—about your work that you do love (and if love’s too strong of a word for you, I’ll accept “like” or “care about”). Is there a colleague at the office you enjoy working with? Are there particular clients or customers who appreciate the great work you do for them? Is there a role model in your company that you look up to and get inspiration from? Is there something about the principles or mission of your company that you find personally gratifying?

In the day-to-day crush and pressure of things, it’s very easy to forget about the good and meaningful elements of your job; yet, if you intentionally remind yourself of those things and focus on them for a time— you’ll find that your level of personal satisfaction, energy, and enthusiasm will come back. Sometimes right away.

So, next Monday morning, after you brush your teeth and have your coffee, instead of allowing yourself to be overcome with a sense of dread about the imminent workday and week, ask yourself this question: “What do I love (or at least “like”) about this work / company / team / project / colleague / client, etc... and how can I show it in the way I work?” And if you find that you have absolutely no answer to any variation of that question—not even if you squint—then let me offer a simple, one-word answer to your dilemma: Leave.