

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE



**Be a role model
who inspires
greatness in others**

FRANK SONNENBERG

Praise for

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

“This book is simple, profound, and beautifully written. Frank Sonnenberg is a force for good in this world, and his wonderful new book, *Leadership by Example*, is ideally suited for the opportunities and challenges of our time. Internally, each of us knows, or can discover, the person we are capable of being. It is only when we choose to rise up and become that person, and then inspire others to do the same, that we find the key to true joy and significance. This magnificent book offers fuel for the fire within!”

STEPHEN M. R. COVEY

The New York Times* and #1 *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author of *The Speed of Trust* and *Trust & Inspire

“*Leadership by Example* is a unique and delightful book. It delves into fundamental questions to ask yourself as a leader yearning to make a difference in this world. Once you pick it up, you’ll never put it down!”

ANGELA MAIERS

Founder of Choose2Matter

“Brilliant insight. *Leadership by Example* is filled with commonsense principles and values that aren’t very common today. Be a positive role model and help change the world one person at a time.”

FAISAL HOQUE

Founder of Shadoka and NextChapter, and #1 *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *LIFT* and *Everything Connects*

“Apply the wise—and wonderfully readable—counsel in this book and you’ll transform every facet of your life from good to better to best. Another winner by Frank Sonnenberg!”

DR. RODGER DEAN DUNCAN

International bestselling author, former senior *Fortune* 100 business executive, and member of two prior White House administrations

Praise for

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

“*Leadership by Example* is a remarkable, must-read book for anyone wanting to be an exceptional role model. It is a treasure for those willing to think beyond today to ensure a better tomorrow.”

DR. OLEG KONOVALOV

Called “the da Vinci of Visionary Leadership,” and one of the top global leadership experts

“This book is filled with practical advice. You’ll find thought-provoking questions, lessons that guide you through business and life scenarios, and ideas to help you be a better person. Read it, take it to heart, and be the change you want to be!”

ANNETTE FRANZ

Founder and CEO, CX Journey Inc., and member of the *Forbes* Coaches Council

“A life-changer! *Leadership by Example* challenges us to seize the opportunity to make an impact in our own life and the lives of others. This is how the world becomes a better place.”

LORELEI COLBERT

Founder of Chemo to Kindness

“*Leadership by Example* is an informative, engaging, and thoroughly delightful book. Short of taking Frank Sonnenberg home with you, there’s no better source on how to become an exemplary role model.”

DR. STEVEN J. NOBLE

Taught “*The Leadership Challenge*” at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business

“Frank Sonnenberg has once again written a vitally important book that begs to be read again and again. *Leadership by Example* provides great insight into what it takes to be a good person and leader. I highly recommend it.”

SUE SCHEFF

Nationally recognized author, parent advocate, and family Internet safety advocate

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ROLE MODELS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

When some folks envision a hero, they think idol — someone larger than life, someone who broke a world record, or put their life on the line for another person. Others consider someone who is continually in the spotlight — seen by millions of folks every day. That may be true. But there are also people who we look up to who are *not* famous and don't even view themselves as special.

But they are.

Role models don't have to be rich, powerful, or famous. They don't have to be the most attractive, wear the fanciest clothes, or drive the most expensive cars. They are as commonplace as a family member, business colleague, or even the person next door. But they represent someone very special in your life and in the lives of others.

They may be a teacher who changed a student's life, a coach who helped her players achieve greatness, or even a stranger who went out of his way for a person he didn't know. They're spreading cheer, bringing out the best in people, and going out of their way to touch other people's lives.

People don't "sign up" to be a role model; others naturally gravitate toward them and look up to them. In fact, you may be a role model to someone and not even know it.

That's the central theme of this book.

You send messages continuously — even if you don't intend to. And those messages are having a profound impact on people's lives.

It's not just what you say, but what you do; when you speak up or when you turn a blind eye; when you're friendly or when you give folks the cold shoulder; when you hold steadfast to your values or when you give in to temptation.

Ask yourself: What does my attitude say about me? Am I proud of what I do and who I am? Would I be proud if my kids followed my example? Would I want to be friends with myself? If you're a parent, teacher, coach, religious leader, neighbor, or manager, you're influencing people every day. Make it positive!

I hope you find the essays in this book to be of value as you strive to become an exemplary role model. Determine how each lesson applies to you and how you're going to turn your ideas into action. Believe in your ability to make a difference. You may not be able to change the world, but you can change the world around you. As the old proverb says, "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." Change a life and create a ripple that cascades forever. Enjoy. :)

HERE'S TO THE FOLKS WHO BRING GOOD TO THE WORLD

Here's to role models who believe in the power of good — not what's good for them but rather, what's good for others.

Here's to parents who recognize the enormous responsibility of bringing a child into the world. Parents who sacrifice everything to ensure that their children have a good life.

Here's to spouses who understand the commitment of marriage — recognizing that love doesn't have an expiration date.

Here's to leaders who have the courage and the will to stand up for what's right rather than what's easy.

Here's to the patriots who defended the freedoms that we enjoy today. And here's to the patriots who honor their sacrifices and refuse to take them for granted.

Talking and doing are not synonyms.

Here's to folks, like you and me, who try to make a difference. You may be a teacher who changed a student's life, a coach who helped your players achieve greatness, or even a stranger who went out of your way for a person you didn't know. You live with honor and integrity, stay true to your beliefs and values, and your word is as good as a contract. You set high standards, make good choices,

and accept responsibility for your actions. You treat everyone with dignity and respect, make people feel special, and you bring out the best in them. In sum, you strive to be an exemplary role model and lead by example in everything you do.

*You never know when you're creating a spark
that will last forever.*

Here's to the superstars who epitomize the good in the world. They're the dreamers who ponder the impossible, the believers who give us hope, and the fireballs who forge ahead regardless of what stands in their way. They're everyday people who are too humble to seek attention — even though they deserve it...and too honorable to ask for a reward — even though they earned it.

You know these folks, and I do, too. They bring good to the world. And I for one wish to thank them for their leadership, courage, and selflessness. They're the best of the best — ordinary folks who make a difference in extraordinary ways. :)

DO YOU RISE TO THE OCCASION?

Staying in your comfort zone is easy. You don't have to think, you don't have to learn, and you know exactly what to expect. In fact, you can almost live on automatic pilot. Right? The problem is that if you remained in your comfort zone your whole life, you'd still be crawling like a baby. That said, you grow most when you face the unknown, tackle new challenges, and are confronted by adversity. During those times, you're put to the test and your moral character is shaped. Do you take the path of least resistance or rise to the occasion and embrace new horizons?

Every time you face adversity, you grow stronger; every time you fail, you gain humility; and every time you lose, it makes you more resilient. But knowing that's true doesn't make those experiences any easier to swallow.

Sacrifice today and win tomorrow.

WILL YOU CHOOSE WHAT'S RIGHT?

Every time you make a choice, there's a corresponding tradeoff. Are you willing to sacrifice *today* to ensure a better *tomorrow*?

Choices are easy. The hard part is living with them.

You face decisions every day. Here are 25 choices that define you as a person. Which path will you take? Do you:

Do what's right or make exceptions when it's convenient?

Think for yourself or subscribe to groupthink?

Accept accountability or sidestep responsibility?

Invest in your future or refuse to make the sacrifices?

Help those in need or expect others to shoulder the burden?

Stand up for what's right or remain silent and not rock the boat?

Address challenges head-on or kick the can down the road?

Feel happy when others succeed or resent them for their achievements?

Admit mistakes or play the blame game?

Create win-win situations or aim for winner-take-all?

Stand firm for your beliefs or bend rules to win acceptance?

Forgive and forget or harbor bitterness and animosity?

Encourage honest debate or shut down dissenting opinions?

Live with honor or make exceptions if you can get away with it?

Stand strong when things get rough or quit at the first sign of adversity?

Discipline others for inappropriate behavior or look the other way?

Invest in your personal growth or whine that you need a break?

Confront your fears or surrender to them?

Invest in your future or complain that people like you don't stand a chance?

Accept your share of menial work or contend that you're above it?

Address your poor habits or make excuses for your shortcomings?

Listen to your conscience or give in to temptation?

Put others' needs ahead of your own or make everything all about you?

Work hard to secure your rewards or think the world owes you?

Accept responsibility for your life or *constantly* rely on the good graces of others?

WILL YOU RISE TO THE CHALLENGE?

Every day that you sacrifice, you build strength; every time that you overcome a challenge, you build determination; and every milestone that you cross builds confidence.

That's easy to say, but harder to do.

There will come a time when the stakes are high, you're under stress, you're out on a limb by yourself — and an opportunity stares you right in the face. You will be confronted with the decision of whether to jump at that opportunity or rise to the occasion, do the right thing, and decline it. That decision will require courage, character, and conviction.

You'll weigh the short-term benefit versus the long-term consequences.

The next time you're faced with a decision of this kind, pause for a moment...and think. Will you do what's right or what's convenient, consider others or think only of yourself, listen to your conscience or do what's popular? Some folks may steer you in one direction while your moral sense guides you in another. At the end of the day, it's not enough to *say* that you'll do what's right; it's what you actually *do* that makes the difference. It's your choice, your conscience, your life. :)

LIGHTEN UP...AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Each day is a gift for you to carefully unwrap. What happens next is up to you. You can cherish every second or let time slip through your fingers. You can live every day with gusto or worry about what tomorrow will bring. You can reach out and make a difference in other people's lives or focus on more ways to better your own. You are the architect of your life. If you're constantly worried, stressed out, and in a rush, it's time to lighten up...and take a deep breath.

While you're busy, life happens.

Life doesn't happen to you; you make it happen. Instead of living life to the fullest, we're all living life on the edge — cramming as much as we can into a day and scrambling to get ahead at all costs.

20 WAYS TO LIGHTEN UP

Here are 20 ways to lighten up and lead a more fulfilling life:

Money's not worth what you think. Money can buy some *things*, but it can't buy everything. As a case in point, it can't buy strong self-esteem, noble character, abundant memories, deep relationships, lasting peace of mind, a purposeful life, outstanding health, deep spirituality, or a clear conscience.

Some people are nicer to others than themselves. Are you your own worst critic? It's one thing to expect perfection of yourself, yet quite another to beat yourself up for coming up short.

If you don't believe in yourself, why should others? When you constantly seek approval, you give more weight to other people's opinions than to your own.

Make your priorities a priority. If you try too hard to please others, you may fail to satisfy your own needs. Know what matters most to you and be *unwilling* to compromise those priorities at any price.

Time management can be a waste of time. Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance. When you account for every second, you miss precious moments.

Stressed out? You may be doing it to yourself. Do you wait until the last minute, refuse to ask for help, and bite off more than you can chew? Some people complicate their life and then complain that their life is complicated.

Make a life while making a living. Find balance between work and family, acknowledging that both contribute to your happiness.

Don't believe everything you think. Most things that people worry about never come to pass. What's more, anticipation is often worse than reality. That said, if you stop worrying, it'll be one less thing to worry about.

You can't control the uncontrollable. You *can't* control outside events, but you *can* control how you respond to them.

Success is all in your head. Your mindset can work *for* or *against* you. If you believe you can't, you won't.

Winning doesn't have to be at someone's expense. Instead of focusing on what you want, focus on areas of mutual interest. Moreover, never win at the expense of a relationship.

Success comes at a cost. Everything worthwhile in life requires an element of sacrifice. If you're not willing to make the investment, don't complain about the outcome.

Trying to achieve perfection is anything but perfect. Strive for excellence, not perfection. Hold yourself to a high standard, not an impossible one.

Failing doesn't make you a failure. Mistakes don't make you a failure but beating yourself up makes you feel like one.

Someone's good fortune is not your misfortune. People don't hurt you by being successful; you hurt yourself by being envious of them. In fact, the *more* time you spend vilifying others, the *less* time you'll have to make your own dreams come true.

Envy can turn friends into adversaries. Keeping up with the Joneses is like chasing a rainbow. While it might look beautiful from a distance, it will always be beyond your grasp.

Leave the past behind. Forgiving doesn't mean forgetting, nor does it mean approving, what someone did. It just means letting go of the anger toward that person.

Toxic people can be dangerous to your health. A lot has been said about the impact that toxic waste has on the environment. Consider the impact that toxic people have on your life.

Never lower your personal standards. Never! If you're not ready to do something, don't let others convince you that you are. One of the true tests of integrity is your refusal to compromise your honor at any price.

Success doesn't always lead to happiness. For some people, life is a competitive sport — more is always better and enough is never enough. The reality is, we place artificial demands on ourselves that undermine our happiness. These demands force us to work harder and harder to cross a finish line that keeps moving.

No one escapes life alive. So, live every day to the max rather than reliving the past or worrying about the future. The fact is, precious moments pass in the blink of an eye, and once they're gone, they're gone forever. You can never get those minutes back no matter how hard you try. Life is filled with ups and downs, so make the most of the in-betweens. :)

CRITICAL LESSONS THAT THEY FAIL TO TEACH YOU IN SCHOOL

Never lower your standards. *Never!* People can't make you do things without your permission. One of the true tests of integrity is your refusal to compromise your honor at any price.

Material possessions wear out. Memories are forever. *Money should never be the cornerstone of your life, nor should it define you as a person.* Moments, rather than possessions, are the true treasures of life.

If you appreciate what you have, you'll never want for more. *Find your happiness, not by seeking more, but by appreciating what you already have.* When you take things for granted, you diminish their importance and may even jeopardize their very existence.

Cheaper isn't always less expensive. *Shop for value, not price.* People who are frugal understand the value of a dollar and make informed and thoughtful decisions. People who are cheap try to spend as little money as possible.

Expectations are everything. *When you believe something's possible, it becomes possible.* Your expectations don't just influence your destiny, they determine it.

Hard work is good for your soul. *Hard work isn't a punishment; it's a gift.* It builds character, provides a sense of purpose, and promotes confidence and self-esteem. The converse is also true. When people are rewarded *without making the effort*, it reduces confidence, promotes dependency, and robs individuals of their personal dignity.

Success is a journey not a destination. *It takes many years to become an overnight success.* The real reward of success isn't the wealth, power, and status that comes with a triumph; it's the feeling of accomplishment that you receive from setting an ambitious goal, overcoming a difficult challenge, and fighting the good fight until success is won.

Success is a game of inches. *Little victories produce big wins.* Most people believe that the best way to win BIG is to swing for the fence — and hit a home run. Rather than going for “all or nothing,” the key to success is continuous improvement.

Winning doesn't have to be at someone's expense. *Never win at the expense of a relationship.* Instead of focusing on what you want, identify opportunities where you can mutually benefit. In other words, think win-win rather than winner-take-all.

Achieving success is the easy part. *Success is not guaranteed, it's temporary.* If you disregard the things that contribute to your success, you'll learn how fragile success really is.

Rewarding people for showing up is a high price to pay. *People stop trying when there's no benefit for being exceptional and no consequence for being mediocre.* If you want excellence, you must recognize and reward it.

Be the first to give. *Give for the right reason — and that is, give for no reason at all.* While takers may accumulate a lot of things in life, they'll never experience the joy of being a giver.

Give without strings attached. *Give of yourself, not because you expect something in return, but because witnessing others' happiness is, by itself, a worthy reward.* When you give of yourself and expect something in return, it's a transaction not a kind gesture.

Moral character is the DNA of success and happiness. *Virtue isn't something that happens to you. You choose to make it happen — or not.* Goodness is a bright flame within you. Use it to light up the world.

Lead by example. *Words express what's on your mind, but your actions say what's in your heart.* You can lecture people until you're blue in the face, but the best way to teach someone is to *show, not tell.*

Virtue isn't demanding more of others; it's expecting more of yourself. *Some of the most precious things you possess are your honor, your dignity, and your reputation.* Be the person others look up to — whose character is beyond reproach. Be the one who inspires others to achieve excellence. And be the one who lives with honor and dignity. At the end of the day, if you're not proud of who you are and the way you choose to live your life, little else matters. :))

FRIENDS

She volunteers to be the designated driver on New Year's Eve; he helps himself to a beer rather than wanting to be waited on; she doesn't take the picture because she's expected to be included in the family photo; he doesn't leave the party with the crowd but instead, stays to clean up the mess; she hears what you said, but also hears what you didn't say; when he is awakened by your call, he still says he's so glad to hear from you; she throws you a celebration party even though you beat her out for the promotion; he knows it's only an argument and not the end of the friendship; she loses more sleep over your problems than over her own; he knows you'd give him the shirt off your back, although he'd never ask; she gives you the bigger piece of cake, even if it's chocolate.

Friends share one another's dreams, open their hearts, and complete one another's life.

— **Frank Sonnenberg**

ABOUT THE **AUTHOR**

Frank Sonnenberg is an award-winning author and a well-known advocate for moral character, personal values, and personal responsibility. He has written 10 books and has been named one of “America’s Top 100 Thought Leaders” and one of “America’s Most Influential Small Business Experts.” Frank has served on several boards and has consulted to some of the largest and most respected companies in the world.

Additionally, his blog — FrankSonnenbergOnline — has attracted millions of readers on the Internet. It was recently named one of the “Top Self-Improvement and Personal Development Blogs” in the world, and it continues to be named among the “Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs,” the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs,” and the “Best Inspirational Blogs On the Planet.”

OTHER TITLES FROM
**FRANK
SONNENBERG**

THE PATH TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE

LISTEN TO YOUR CONSCIENCE

That's Why You Have One

SOUL FOOD

Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life

BOOKSMART

Hundreds of Real-World Lessons for Success and Happiness

FOLLOW YOUR CONSCIENCE

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**MANAGING WITH A CONSCIENCE
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and Commitment*

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