

SOAR

A Gate-to-Gate Journey
of Leadership Essentials
(Based on Actual Events)

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LEARN

Published By:

BRANTA Worldwide

Sacramento, California

USA

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ISBN

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LEAD

Why We Wrote S O A R

Being an Effective Leader is the hardest job you'll ever have, and it is really quite simple.

Unfortunately, it is not easy. This parable distills effective leadership down to fundamental learned behaviors.

Leadership Essentials

- Effective Leaders **build trust** by making their word mean something while giving and receiving high-impact feedback.
- Effective Leaders demonstrate **caring through listening** to understand what motivates by discovering other's hopes, dreams, concerns, and fears.

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- Effective Leaders hold themselves responsible to develop others through **coaching** and accountable for addressing unacceptable behavior through **confrontation**.
 - Effective Leaders **create change** by helping people move through the change process by communicating, listening, and providing feedback.
 - Effective Leaders aren't victims. They recognize their **influence** on the culture through their **attitudes and behaviors**.

This book does not present a 'flavor of the month' program or silver bullet to magically make you a leader. Effective Leaders do not need a program, a budget, a job title, or anyone else's permission. They only need to take the risk, to make the choice, to **learn, lead** and *soar*.



SOAR

Table of Contents

Denver to Cincinnati.....	23
The Pilot's Word	33
Good, Great, Fine.....	43
Water With A Lemon	57
An Old Friend: Part I.....	69
An Old Friend: Part II	81
Voices From Behind.....	93
The Bridge	107

**Don't put your
ducks in a row,
GET YOUR
GEESE IN A
SKEIN!**

Denver to Cincinnati

“Flight 6536, our 10:01 am departure to Cincinnati is now ready for boarding. Seating Group 1, welcome aboard.” The United Airlines gate agent announced over the intercom system at Gate 45.

I pulled my boarding pass out of my shirt pocket and made my way to the door. In one hand, I had my ticket and my cup of coffee. With the other, I pulled my blue Rick Steves’ rolling suitcase with my black Samsonite briefcase slipped over the long retractable handle. The gate agent ran my ticket through the machine and the stub popped up at the other end. I pinched the stub between my pinky and my coffee as I walked through the door marked 45. As I made my way down the jetway, I

quickly realized that this was going to be another case of ‘hurry up and wait’. There were already at least ten other passengers lined up outside the plane’s front door waiting for someone at the front of the line to figure out how to properly store their oversized carry-on bags.

I have never been one to stand comfortably in a line. In fact, for some reason, I just don’t like to have my back to other people or ‘the action’. At a restaurant, I will always choose the chair at the table that looks back into the room, or that faces the door. I am the guy that makes people nervous on the elevator because I will not just get on and turn to face the door. I like to know what is going on around me. You can call it paranoid or curious, but it is just who I am. On this day, I was no different. As I approached the end of the line, I whipped my suitcase around and turned to lean against the handrail that ran the length of the jetway. From this position, I could see both the

line to the plane as well as the next passengers who would be walking down the blue and orange jetway carpet.

“What could be taking so long?” I thought to myself as the line to the plane remained still.

Minutes seem like hours sometimes when you are on the road traveling for a living: especially making flight connections in Denver.

With a slight turn of my head, my eyes scanned the posters on the white walls as they moved from the line ahead of me to the next passengers coming in after me. It was a young couple, maybe in their early 20's. They walked with her hand in his arm, each pulling a bag behind them. As my eyes started to move back to the line in front of me, they stopped momentarily catching the eyes of the guy. An awkward moment for most guys when their eyes meet. Men are much more comfortable talking side by side instead of face to face. So,

having our eyes meet, meant that one of us had to say something. He started.

“Hey”.

Perfect, he broke the ice. Now all I needed was a simple response and the moment would be over.

“How ya doing?”

All was right with the world and once again I started to move my eyes back to the plane’s front door. But before I could get totally turned, I heard a thud and a groan. Quickly glancing back up the jetway toward the gate and the oncoming passengers, I noticed the guy reeling from a sharp elbow planted firmly in his ribs by his female companion.

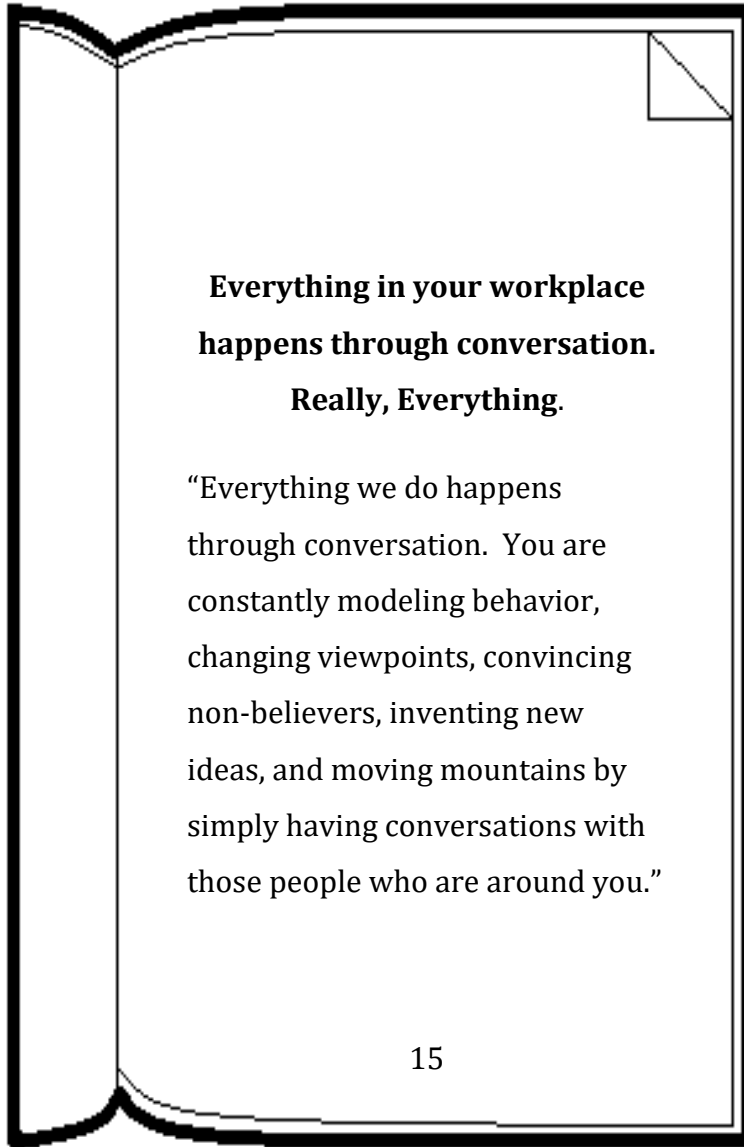
“What was that for?” he barked.

“He asked you a question!” she responded, referring to me.

“That’s OK,” I responded before he could say anything. “I really don’t care.”

It wasn’t a question; it was a greeting. I did not expect, nor want an answer. He knew that. I knew that. She just didn’t. However, she got me thinking. How many times have I thought I was having a meaningful conversation when we were just exchanging pleasantries? An effective leader must be a strong communicator. In this day and age of too much work and too little time, our opportunities for purposeful contact with those we must influence is extremely limited. Therefore, when we do have those opportunities, we better make sure to make the most of them.

I pulled a bright yellow book out of my briefcase and flipped to the page with the folded over corner. I had just finished reading Dr. Todd Conklin’s book Simple Revolutionary Acts: Ideas to revitalize yourself and your workplace on the flight from Sacramento to Denver.



Finally, the line was moving. I shoved the book back into my bag and proceeded down the jetway. Little did I know; this was just the start of a journey about much more than getting from Denver to Cincinnati.