

do it as well, here's how.

2. How to change (your life?) in 30 days and other step-by-step plans.
3. The world in front is unlimited, don't constrain yourself to a limited path.
4. Here are some categories (of people, situations, etc). Find your fit and follow the instructions.
5. Here is the (experiential) evidence. Somebody (some company?) found himself in this situation and did that.
6. Here is a method/trick/way. Repeat again and again, it works.
7. You are at the centre, you are in charge, reward yourself, you are great.
8. Don't judge, look at all the angles, everything is relative, understand and comprehend, then you'll see things differently.
9. Just do it, stop winging and procrastinating, move!
10. Pick and mix, take what suits you, what you like. You can leave the rest; you don't have to agree with it all.
11. Rely on a 'higher power' (religious, spiritual?). Let go.
12. Trust your intuition, your feelings (or don't look for rationality).

I did it, so can you!

There you have it; 12 pristine plots, 12 scripts, 12 maps (which in itself is an example of script number 4 – everything can be reduced to categories). These themes cut across a broad spectrum, from individual self-help and motivation to business management, from collective intellectual wisdom to practical 'this is what you need to do' advice, from spiritual and religious connotations to prosaic streetwise realities. They're all mixed up on the same airport bookshelves. Divinity and Zen meets Covey (author of *The Seven Habits* series), meets biography, meets cookbook methodology, meets Jack Welch, meets DIY, meets self-esteem injection. I have a better idea for the label on the bookshelf. Forget 'self-help' or 'psychology' or 'lifestyle' or even 'business'; call it 'maps'.

Through my behavioural sciences glasses, I can reduce the 12 scripts further:

1. You have lots of possibilities in front of you, you are rich but you may not know it.
2. Choose.
3. Stop analysing, just do it.
4. I've done it, you can do it.

You could construct a whole sub-industry of self-help themes around plots containing combinations of all four. But not here and now.

I met David Taylor at a dinner recently. You may not know who he is but there is a statistical

chance you have had his books in your hands if, like me, you are also an airport nomad. He is the author of *The Naked Leader*, a compilation of wisdom, formula, motivation and other ideas, none of which is original. I can't think of anything in the book that has not been written elsewhere. It almost contains my 12 universal scripts. There is nothing new in there. The overriding proposed formula: know where you want to go, assess the gap, move in that direction (I'm paraphrasing) is hardly breakthrough thinking. The book and its follow-up are full of examples, quotes, suggestions, provocations and attempts to build your own self-esteem. "What if you could not fail?" asks Taylor. It is light, very light, and very simple, you might think irrelevant even. The book has been translated into 38 languages and it is a fantastic success. David travels the world giving speeches, talking to CEOs, providing wisdom and makes a living through it. David is, by any account, an extremely successful writer-guru in the motivation-inspiration-self-help-leadership arena. *The Naked Leader* is a great success that contains no new thinking, no new theory, no new inspiration, no discovery of a new method, no new research and no new model of leadership.

But there are two reasons for David's success. One I knew after reading his books and the other I only learnt accidentally after meeting him in person. The first has to do with David being a cartographer: he draws maps. *The Naked Leader* is a map, or to put it better, a collection of many maps. As a map-maker, David has not created the geography himself; he just draws the connections and paints the landscape. Here is the secret: people need maps. This is a rather stupid statement, but it is the best I can think of to explain how we are all desperate for the books that tell us how to get from A to B, what options we have, how to get faster or slower and where to stop. A map tells you that there are some possibilities in front of you, that the journey is possible. It also gives you some reassurances that you'll get there.

We're all map-readers

There are geographical maps, spiritual journey maps, personal development maps, strategy maps, business plan maps, child education maps, political maps and relationship maps. They are usually made available to us via our teachers, mentors, parents, political leaders, bosses, religious figures, writers, gurus and

Self-help books are usually found in the psychology section, where often the only real psychology is the label on the bookshelf

Maybe if we put all our maps together, we'll make some sense of the journey because there is usually more than one way to reach the shore

airport business school authors. The quality varies but they are available in huge supply. A good business leader tells us about the company strategy and the route needed to get there and provides a set of objectives and rules. A religious leader may appeal to higher powers and translate the journey for his flock. A political leader does the same. It's all cartography. Even those who reject maps, who don't want to follow instructions or dictations, or who want to create their own pathways, have maps. They may not know it, but they will be somewhere in their minds.

The second reason for David's success is David himself. He is not only a good cartographer of pathways, a writer of books with no new ideas, no new research, no original breakthrough thinking, but he is also a good, honest human being. The statements about the lack of originality that I have repeated so far would not trouble him. On the contrary, he would say: "It's all out there in life," all written in previous business books (which he has researched extensively) and that the real secret is that there is no secret. David Taylor genuinely wants to change the world and believes in the ability of people to boost their self esteem and 'do it'. He himself is involved in significant charity/not-for-profit initiatives. He is an honest cartographer who says: "I haven't invented the geography; I have put together some maps."

Maps to find the maps

The 'leader as cartographer' is one of my own five faces of leadership, which have not enjoyed the same publicity that David's work has. The other faces are those of a teacher, architect, broker and historian. Map-makers are in abundance. They sit in Parliament or Congress, they preach in places of worship, they teach in schools (including business schools), they are invited to express their views and show their maps on prime time TV, they write books, they produce tapes and videos, they give after dinner speeches and charge for motivational-inspirational retreats. Some of them are enlightening, liberating and enhancers of your own self-esteem, while others are pretty dangerous. We need a map to distinguish between maps and map-makers. Business navigation is dangerous: not only is the sea full of Bermuda triangles but also of mariner-luring sirens. Maybe if we bring all

our maps together, we'll make some sense of the journey because there is usually more than one way to reach the shore. David Taylor had to undress leadership to be able to dress it again with all the bits and pieces of clothing he could find. Maybe it's not such a bad idea. Yes, bring your maps.

A classical stereotype of leadership is one of a visionary man who has ideas that perhaps nobody else has, who knows where he is going and where people have to go, and tells them. It is assumed that some level of grandiose ambiguity may be tolerated. After all, these guys are very clever and not everybody is able to understand them. Very often, it was assumed, it just has to sound great to be visionary and leader-ish. These point-of-destination-leaders are often not very good cartographers. I believe the business world needs more map-makers than men with perfect 20/20 linear vision. The trust-me-come-with-me-I-know-best type is an interesting literary figure, but statistically dangerous. I suggest that in God we may trust, but anybody else in leadership positions should bring decent maps. The map doesn't guarantee total success per se – Columbus didn't reach continental America until his fourth trip – but mobilises people who may have their own maps and compare notes.

Back to the airport theme, last time I was in Spain I bought the latest conspiracy-thriller, a translation of a French book about obscure life in an ex-Benedictine monastery. The plot was terrible, the Spanish awful, the pace depressing and the grammar indigestible. I read quickly, so quickly that I finished about 90% during the flight back to England, because I refused to carry it with me back home. As a symbolic gesture of civilian disobedience and protest against the no-frill-no-manners carrier I was travelling on, I left the book on the plane. I left the aircraft with pride in my small, invisible antisocial behaviour, only to be stopped at the immigration desk by a breathless smiling air hostess saying: "Sir, you forgot your book." 

References

1. L Herrero. 'Five faces of leadership', *Scrip Magazine*. 130:35-36, Jan 2004.

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