

## Book Review

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**Daskal, Lolly. (2017). *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness*. New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin.**

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After 30 years of coaching executives, New York City-based Lolly Daskal, owner of Lead From Within, wrote *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness*, which articulates her process of utilizing archetypes for leadership development. Based on her own observations, practical experience, along with research and case studies, this book explores seven distinct archetypes as well as how to leverage leadership gaps that, in her view, impede leadership greatness. As a companion to the book, she also offers an assessment for the reader to both find their archetype and be aware of their own gap.

The 7 archetypes have names that are intuitive: The Rebel, The Explorer, The Truth Teller, The Hero, The Inventor, The Navigator and The Knight. As I first started reading, I was anxious to find out which archetype I would fall under and if I would be surprised by the answer. More than one felt true and appealing, which is often the case with such assessments, but there was no ability to straddle two. Ultimately, we have a little bit of each, but a strongest inclination in one, with something to learn from the others.

Whether to do the assessment prior to reading or after becomes a choice of chicken versus egg. Assessments can be fun and informative, but often, unless the answer resonates, they are forgotten. Daskal's thought is that if groups can take the assessment together, then there might be an opportunity for meaningful group discussion over concepts and stories that are relatable.

Daskal utilizes several methods to both describe the archetype and gap. She starts with the articulation of the archetype, followed by a story or examples of a person that embodies the archetype. She then notes the key to success for the archetype along with how one might cultivate it. The real key to true understanding of the main archetype, in her view, is explaining and naming

the gap. The discussion of the gap archetype, things to be aware of and how to leverage the gap in a positive way is the opportunity for real leadership development. Each chapter ends with famous people who are examples of leaders with the particular archetype, along with follow-up questions for learning.

Some of the best examples in the book are her personal client experiences, which give a coach an opportunity for a fresh view and analysis. For example, the story of the sushi master Jiro for The Inventor archetype gives the reader a tangible story that is not only memorable due to the price tag of a meal at Jiro's restaurant, but effective because of the focus and vision he uses for his sushi perfection (pp. 122-126). The specific examples help give a tangible picture of an exemplary archetype. The personal stories are powerful because they are both interesting and relatable.

Less effective, but still poignant for me as a reader, are stories plucked from the news, which in some cases feel too familiar. The story of Dr. Omalu and his work with concussions of NFL football players, told in a popular 2015 movie *Concussion* with Will Smith, explains the archetype, The Truth Teller (pp. 74-80). The story of Dr. Omalu as a truth teller is classic: telling the truth at all costs, while noble, causes disruption. The better story, in my view, is the 'gap' to this archetype, because it talks about a real client and what happened when suspicion takes hold of a person (pp. 84-85).

Another example, widely discussed, is The Stanford Prison Experiment, also a 2015 film of the same name, by Stanford professor Philip Zimbardo, which is used to discuss The Bystander, The Hero's leadership gap (pp. 110-112). The failed prison experiment clearly demonstrates how a person could become a bystander, rather than a hero, due to peer pressure, and thus turn "a blind eye and deaf ear on actions that may be abusive." (p. 112) Other examples include a modern approach to research, including internet research, stories and personal experience, which gives the reader an opportunity to find different ways to understand and best assimilate the material.

With so many developmental tools available in the coaching profession, it begs the question, which tool is best or even, why yet another book and companion assessment? For some, the system discussed in the book is intuitive not only with the titles for each archetype and gap, but in the sensical explanations. In the leadership context, it's an opportunity for a different kind of discussion about leadership, particularly with the gaps that both counterbalance the strength but may be a deviant 'blind spot', crushing

potential leadership. *The Leadership Gap* is a pleasurable and quick read, with a fun assessment. Depending on the client, the coach can use this book as a tool for discussion either individually or as a group and even use the book as suggested reading for thought provoking conversation and individual contemplation and development.

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