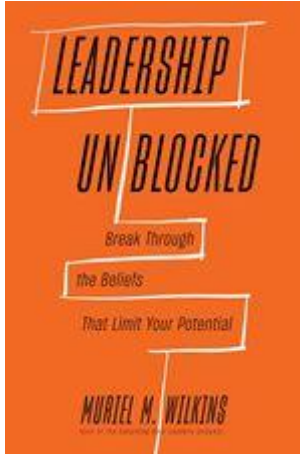


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW ¹



Book Title: ***Leadership Unblocked: Break Through the Beliefs That Limit Your Potential***

Author: **Muriel M. Wilkins**

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press

List Price: US \$30.00

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Reviewer: **Rene' Lazarchik, PMP, CSM**

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Introduction

In ***Leadership Unblocked: Break Through the Beliefs That Limit Your Potential***, Muriel M. Wilkins, a seasoned professional Executive Coach, presents a powerfully profound approach to solving professional challenges by inspiring the reader to discover and assess the impact of their own personal and often subconscious deep internal beliefs. The reader is invited to experience a series of play-by-play real-life stories of senior leaders who become stuck in their ability to make progress with a current problem or circumstance and witness the victory of each leader won by being coached through the process of deep belief examination and concluding with meaningful realignment for success.

The book is rooted in Wilkins's personal experience blended with insight from complimentary disciplines such as philosophy, modern and social science, psychology, Emotional Intelligence, and professional leadership as well as research on the human brain and motivation. The stories, tools, and systematic method discussed deliver extremely useful, practical, and valuable knowledge that will be relatable to any business leader and/or project/program manager both for optimizing their own success as well as that of their teams and organization.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book begins focusing on the significance of inner beliefs. Through research, experts, examples, and experience, Wilkins explores the influence of hidden beliefs with the revelation that our own beliefs drive everything we do, think, feel, and

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ultimately how we behave and respond to all aspects of life including professional endeavors. Building on this astute reality, the book is structured to provide a 360 degree perspective by teaching the process of uncovering hidden beliefs through the examination of the plight and ascent of senior leaders coached with the Blocked to Unblocked approach, then inspiring the use of the same Blocked to Unblocked roadmap to self-coach, and finally, with mastery of the process, encouraging the practice of helping others achieve effective long term breakthroughs and reach their goals.

The framework or Blocked to Unblocked RoadMap is illustrated using seven (7) of the most common “blockers” or limiting beliefs hidden beneath the exterior of many ambitious high performing leaders. A three (3) stage six (6) step process is exercised in detail by reviewing examples of each of the seven (7) most encountered beliefs that can interfere with translating intended objective to desired impact. Throughout the book and unveiling of each transformation, the author demonstrates how change happens, what is required to become unblocked, and actions needed for the continuation of reaching full potential.

Highlights

Anchoring its emphasis on overcoming professional hurdles, one of the book’s significant points of influence is emphasizing the importance of self-awareness with research indicating that only 10-15% of people are self-aware. The author brings visibility to the fact that everyone gets blocked but can be unaware they are blocked, how they are being perceived, and the role deep internal beliefs, albeit often subconscious, play in contributing to their unproductive efforts to resolve blocked progress. Indeed, this is where the technique of uncovering hidden beliefs begins – becoming aware you are stuck.

The benefits of challenging the status quo for addressing professional struggles is an additional narrative expanded upon. Supporting evidence is used to show how uncovering the origin of hidden beliefs enables reframing beliefs that can be better aligned with the required newfound behaviors to yield the desired result. More importantly, the positive impact gained from change through belief exploration verses a traditional tactical approach is proven through examples to be a permanent solution rather than a short-term fix destined to fade and eventually become ineffective.

Exploring the nature of beliefs is another key contribution this book offers. Beliefs are characterized as malleable, created to serve a purpose, and have roots that may go as far back as childhood. In the book, we learn beliefs are often derived from an experience typically to protect us and have likely unknowingly been reinforced and even encouraged over time. The potentially career-changing realization is that assumptions and beliefs can be replaced with new ones that better serve our purpose.

Highlights: What I liked!

The most impressionable attribute of the book is its authenticity and realistic content. The examples are applicable to real-life professional issues, and Wilkins uses her own personal workplace experience in addition to that of her clients, which collectively lends solid credibility to the consequential practices recommended. The private thought and action pivots, reasons behind the reframes, and coaching strategies are key pieces of the methodology making it easy to digest. It is also helpful that despite each learning example being different, the process itself is consistently repeated, bringing out new angles and considerations to strengthen knowledge and understanding.

Throughout all encompassed discussions, traditional textbook principles are traded for a human-centric approach that teaches contemplative self-analysis because only the person blocked can unblock themselves. The book's guiding suggestion to face long-standing entrenched beliefs that have served a vital purpose with thoughtful consideration as to whether the belief operates as an advantage today in current circumstances is one of the most profound takeaways. The methodical approach reminds the reader that mindset is key and continuing to perform at full potential will require lifelong iteration of the belief examination process.

Who might benefit from the Book

This book is invaluable for any professional, especially project and program managers, PMO leaders, and executives where credibility, composure, and influence are paramount to productivity. It is especially worthwhile for high performing leaders working in environments where collaboration, confidence, dynamic leadership, and stakeholder alignment are critical for achieving their goals and objectives. Any professional responsible for guiding transformation, leading teams, and engaging customers and Executive leaders in high-stake decisions will find this book to be a true lifeline of hope, especially in times where the road to success seems unavailable and impossible.

Broadly speaking, the guided concepts and overall framework presented can be helpful to anyone even outside the context of professional environments. Although it is positioned within a professional backdrop, the content is universal and applicable to all aspects of life.

Conclusion

In summary, ***Leadership Unblocked: Break Through the Beliefs That Limit Your Potential***, offers a thoughtful and systematic approach backed by supporting authors and researchers that effectively breaks down the human elements of how we get blocked in our professional pursuits. It is an eye-opening book of self-discovery that guides professionals through the deepest why's for actions, inactions, and behaviors,

highlighting the gap between intention and unintended reality. With insightful examples, it easily demonstrates that at the root of most high-powered strong-driving individuals are basic human wants, needs, feelings, and compulsions such as being accepted, the fear of failure, defining self-worth with accomplishment, frustration, and faulty assumptions and expectations, that when studied carefully, can shed light on obvious shifts required to help move the needle in the right direction to achieve the desired outcome.

Professionals and leaders at any point throughout their career in addition to project/program managers can benefit from this book as it underlines the importance of regularly seeking open and honest feedback, an essential part of self-awareness needed to adequately participate in belief analysis. Embracing the exercises, tools, lists, overall framework and dissecting personal patterns while hearing the accounts of executive coaching sessions with blocked leaders enables readers to gain the knowledge to navigate through their own blockers and become their own professional coaches.

Taken as a whole, this book proves to be an excellent resource full of self-help content and is educational across many interpersonal dimensions that can impact the performance of any professional. The central premise that all leaders and professionals have hidden beliefs and they all get stuck introduces the need to master the skill of getting unstuck. The common predicament of owning a strong hidden but now problematic belief that has long served in a person's best interest can be difficult to work through. As convincingly taught in the book, "What got you here won't get you there and What got you here won't always get others there." This is a must read to gain the lifelong knowhow to become continuously capable of accepting feedback as reality and becoming devoted to iteratively working through this transformational process.

For more about this book, go to: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/10729-PDF-ENG>

About the Reviewer



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Rene' Lazarchik, PMP, has close to 20 years of corporate experience, all in technology-based companies with the majority of her experience in the telecommunications sector. She has served in Process Engineering, Project and Program Management, Product Management, and Customer Success. With experience managing people, projects, programs, products, and processes, she has worked in both large global companies as well as start-up ventures. Although she has a diverse and versatile background, the common thread throughout her career has been cross-functional collaboration and leadership. She has an undergraduate degree in Manufacturing Engineering Technology as well as an MBA. In addition to holding a PMP, she has also earned her CSM certification. Rene' is a regular attending member of the Dallas PMI Chapter and can be reached at Rene.Lazarchik@gmail.com

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