Design Love In: Marcus Buckingham Book Summary

The Big Idea

Leadership is the craft of shaping experiences that shape human behavior. The best leaders are experience makers.

Experiences drive behaviors. Behaviors drive outcomes. A leader's job is to maximize that equation.

Directive leadership (coaching, feedback, coin-operated incentives) works temporarily. Lasting change comes from the experiences people have with us.

Culture Is Just Experiences

> **“Every moment between a leader and a colleague or a leader and a customer is an experience.**
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> **The first day on the job is an experience. The weekly check-in is an experience. Sending an email is an experience. Presenting work is an experience. Being recognized, being challenged, being supported - or conversely, being dismissed or ignored - are all experiences.**
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> **What we label “culture” is really just the aggregated experiences of the employees. What we say when we want to build a strong culture, what we actually mean is that we want to design every touchpoint so carefully that each person has a similar experience. (And culture building is so hard precisely because there are so many touchpoints that have to be designed.)**
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> **“Always remember that because leaders create experiences in every moment, they are always shaping the internal forces that shape behavior….You are an Experience maker as a leader. Are you a skilled one?**

Two Questions Every Leader Should Ask

1. Will this lead to more students, families, and community members **loving** us?
2. Will this lead to more employees **loving** working here?

On a survey, a 4 is "it was good." Only a 5 is "I loved it," and a 5 predicts future behavior.

Water boils at 212 degrees, and anything below that is not boiling. Either people say "I love that," or we have not changed their behavior.

The Five Sequential Feelings of Love

Feeling	The question people are asking
1. Control	What is this world I have been invited into, and how does it work?
2. Harmony	Do you know what I am feeling?
3. Significance	Do you know my story?
4. Warmth of Others	Who is with me, and how can they help?
5. Growth	How will this experience make me more capable?

The order matters. Each feeling removes one plate of armor. If the first four are missing, you cannot hit people with growth. Most of us build it backwards.

The Simplest Move You Can Make Tomorrow

Meet one-on-one with each person for 15 minutes every week. Ask three questions:

1. How did you feel about last week?
2. What are you working on this week?
3. How can I help?

Do that 52 times a year, and you build control, harmony, and, over time, significance.

Questions for your Leadership Team

- What would change if we asked before every major decision, "Does this help our customers (students, teachers, families, community) love us more? Does this help our employees love working here more?"

- Where are we designing experiences, and where are we only optimizing processes? Which one touchpoint feels mechanical and could feel more human?

- Which of the five feelings do we create best? Which one is weakest, and what could we do this week to improve it?