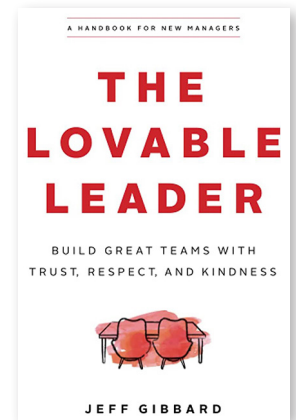


# The Lovable Leader

Build Great Teams with Trust, Respect, and Kindness

by **Jeff Gibbard**



## Contents

Introduction

Page 2

Trust

Page 2

Safe Travels

Page 2

The Journey

Page 3

The Detours

Page 3

Conclusion

Page 4

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Become the leader people love to follow.

Have you noticed how broken our culture of work is? For too long, leadership has been defined by the bottom line, at the outrageous expense of the humans leading and being led. Obviously, results matter. But, now more than ever, leaders need to be so much more than a boss wielding the authority of a title to produce results.

In *The Lovable Leader: Build Great Teams with Trust, Respect, and Kindness*, author, speaker, and strategist Jeff Gibbard offers an invaluable set of practical skills that will inspire people to follow you, make your organization a better place to work, and might just change the broken culture of work. *The Lovable Leader* was written to show how all people are capable of extraordinary things, that obstacles can empower you instead of limit you, and that your abilities, combined with your choices, give everyone you lead the opportunity to become a superhero.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to inspire your team to greatness while managing different personality types.
- How to set goals and hold people accountable for realizing them.
- How to create a safe work environment where loyalty, happiness, and productivity prevail.
- How to be respected and taken seriously by your team members and supervisors.
- Many fundamental skills for excellence in your role.

### Introduction

Our culture of work is broken, and we can only fix it together. This book is a call to action for you—and people really need you.

Leadership is not an achievement, nor a destination, but rather a practice that you will adopt for life. This is what lovable leadership is about: the aspects of leadership that require emotional intelligence, empathy, humility, compassion, and trust. Amid all other externalities, these are the things we can control—how we relate to one another.

The principles outlined in the following chapters are intended to guide you as a leader and provide a framework you can operate from. You should be reading this book if:

- You have just moved into a leadership role and need to understand where to devote your time and attention.
- You need to understand how to manage different personality types.
- You need to be able to set goals and hold people accountable for realizing those goals.
- You want to be respected and taken seriously by both your team members and your supervisors.

This handbook has simple, easy-to-follow frameworks for succeeding and thriving in a leadership role. This advice is ethical and scalable. This framework is designed to foster loyalty and grow cohesive and collaborative teams. For those who embrace these concepts, work will never look the same again. No obstacle will seem insurmountable, no conflict too difficult to resolve. No interaction will lack respect. Even when things don't work out, everyone will walk away better off than if you had not read this book in the first place.

You will become the kind of leader people follow from company to company, for whom they may even quit their current job. You will inspire people to dream bigger, and you will have the skills to ensure those dreams become a reality. This is for those who are ready to go from uncertain to empowered and from overlooked to revered.

---

### Mindset

Lovable leadership begins when you adopt a particular mindset. This style of leadership is grounded, real, and profoundly simple. Once you understand this, all that remains is a choice and the practice. Mindset is the start of your journey.

To adopt the lovable leader's mindset, you must remember that leadership is a choice, not a title. Leadership is a practice, not a destination. Leadership is a responsibility, burden, and privilege. Leadership responsibilities include goal setting, strategy development, communication, team management, and navigating change. "Leader" is just another role on the team. You must stay humble, so you're not seen as a "boss."

---

### Care

We're conditioned by society to dislike work or see it as a necessary evil rather than as an inspirational part of our lives. It's about time we start really caring about things—taking things personally, not professionally. Distancing ourselves emotionally from outcomes is only seeking to protect ourselves from embarrassment and shame.

You need to care deeply about your people. Care is an essential element of love. Loving anything would be difficult if you simultaneously didn't care about it. If you want people to feel safe under your leadership – if you want them to trust you, if you want them to be loyal and hardworking for a shared cause, you have to care.

To show your team that you care, you should make your leadership about them. Acknowledge and validate them. Be mindful of small gestures like saying thank you. Stand for your team members against outsiders, each other, and themselves. Serve their growth and success. Be their biggest cheerleader.

---

### Trust

Trust is a feeling. You sense it deep in your gut. When you trust, you allow yourself to be vulnerable. When you trust, you feel safer taking risks. When you trust, you can build the deep connections needed to harmonize and align with your people.

To build trust, you can sit on the same side of the table by setting the table (conversation context, stating and aligning goals), listening, practicing curiosity, validating (instead of judging), aligning, and getting consent. Remember the Three A's: Acknowledge, Apologize, and Act. Plus, Announce and Ask. Be honest and transparent. Be consistent. Take full ownership (but not credit or blame) for your team's success or failure.

---

### Safe Travels

Whenever you plan a vacation, you automatically assume

you'll arrive at your destination safely. You put faith in the pilot's readiness to do their job and in their ability to fly the plane. You expect the floatation devices and oxygen masks will work in the event of an emergency. In business, you've got to create conditions in which your team members, too, feel safe in your hands as you lead them.

“Safe travels” means you will: Make sure the way toward your goals is safe. Guide the team to make commitments that ensure safety because a team is defined by what we commit to. Ensure that everyone embraces productive conflict to resolve uncertainty or inaction. Be vigilant about making repairs to the team. Always choose to lead with love over fear.

---

### Your Most Important Tool

When it comes down to it, the only tools a leader has are words, ideas, and actions. Therefore, communication is your single most important tool as a leader. Mastering the skill of communication is a lifelong endeavor for the lovable leader to continually pursue.

Your communication determines your team's capacity for success. To master the art of communication as a leader, you must remember the three functions of communication: inform, influence, and inspire. Your capacity with these three functions exists on a spectrum that begin with misinformation, incapacitation, and demotivation respectively. When you master the art of communication to inform, influence, and inspire, you will be more effective, create environments for collaboration, and readily move everyone in the same direction. Set an example for how the team communicates. Be cognizant of the signals your communication sends.

---

### The Destination

Author Deb Gabor likes to say, “If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it with 100 percent accuracy every time.” As a leader, start with the target—in other words, know the destination of your work. Understanding where you want to go is critical because if you don't, you are not leading... you are simply wandering.

Great leaders are almost never in it (solely or primarily) for the money. Money is actually a weak motivator. Studies have shown that employees are more likely to be moved by intrinsic motivators such as job satisfaction, feelings of belonging, and autonomy in their role than they are by extrinsic rewards such as bonuses. Although there are bound

to be exceptions to the rule, most leaders are committed to something bigger than themselves, and to something more meaningful than money.

To lead with purpose, you must remember that purpose is not the same thing as “the reason.” Lead the team to connect with a deeper purpose. Create a tangible destination by using SMART goals. Set big goals. Hold high aspirations and set clear expectations for your team.

---

### The Map

Having identified your destination, you now need to figure out the route to get you there—and you're not going to rely on your GPS here. Strategy traces the route from your destination back to your starting point, creating a map from where you are to where you want to be.

To develop excellent strategies, you must remember that the best-executed strategies begin with aligned goals. Start with the end and work backward. Involve your team in the creation of strategies to deepen their ownership. Document your plans to provide clarity to the team and increase accountability. Help the team understand and manage priorities. Increase accountability across the entire team by locking in commitments because commitments drive action, and genuine buy-in allows for genuine accountability.

---

### The Journey

Once you have determined where you're going (your destination) and how you're getting there (your strategy), you embark upon the journey. This is where ideas and words manifest in action. This is the daily practice of leadership.

To excel at the daily practice of leadership, you can maintain strong team bonds by reinforcing the commitments of the team. Appreciate each individual by judging them on their strengths, not their weaknesses. Manage with the intent to motivate. Maintain an unwavering belief in your team. Step up and carry the additional weight whenever you're needed. Practice balanced oversight. Stay flexible to navigate change. Embrace the power of negative thinking to stay grounded.

---

### The Detours

Leadership will not always go according to plan. You will make mistakes. Your patience and resilience will be tested. You will want to ignore the problems or avoid them,

but you already know that won't help. So, you've got to plan for detours.

When things go wrong with your team, you can try to fix problems rather than get rid of them. Raise intensity instead of your voice by using silence strategically, asking questions, and being clear and reasonable. Be ready for a productive conversation built on the foundation of your moral high ground. Ensure you stay on topic so the issue can be resolved. Leverage intermediaries to open the door for a productive conversation. Care for people even when you have to remove them from my team.

---

### The Balance

Maintaining balance as you lead is critical. Avoid extremes on the journey—too controlling and you'll quash creativity and innovation, too lax and your team will feel directionless—but the moment you think you've got it figured out, you'll find an exception. Stay open, stay humble, experiment, and find what works for you.

To maintain balance in all aspects of leadership, you must avoid going to extremes. Sometimes you can make unilateral decisions instead of collaborative ones. Sometimes you need to assert control, and sometimes need to let go. Ensure your optimism is not naive. Cater your strictness and leniency to individuals. Balance your praise and criticism. Seek to understand what you need to do to bring out the best in each individual.

---

### The Mirror

You've now learned how to be in service of others. You've assumed responsibility, you carry the burden, and you acknowledge your privilege as a leader. Now, it's time to look in the mirror and take care of yourself.

In the fast-paced world of business, the competitive world of sports, or the perilous world of the military, there can be so many other more urgent matters to attend to than your own health. At least, that's how it feels. But physically, mentally, or emotionally weakened leadership can be a liability to your team's success.

To take care of yourself as a leader, you must give yourself space to be imperfect. Take your mental and emotional health seriously. Continually invest in your own growth. Seek out mentors who will challenge you and keep you grounded. Take time off and vacations to avoid burnout.

### Conclusion

Leadership is always a responsibility, a burden, and a privilege. This applies to leading not only downward but also upward to your manager. Leading upward shares many of the same principles as effective top-down leadership. The biggest difference is obviously a shift in the power dynamic. While leaders higher in the org chart can appeal to their organizational status, leading upward cannot rest on that fallback position.

The lovable leadership framework is valuable for companies, for people coming out of college looking to grow their network, for people getting into politics, or really any human being on this planet who interacts with other human beings.

You can learn these principles and let them permeate your behavior in all areas of your life. Think about everything you've read and ask yourself: What if we all behaved as lovable leaders and we did it everywhere? What would a world with more care, trust, and safety look like?

Let's build a better world together. Go forth and be lovable.



**Jeff Gibbard** is an entrepreneur, keynote speaker, strategy consultant, and founder of The Superhero Institute, a certification program for coaches. Jeff is a long-time blogger, and podcaster who hosts the podcasts *Becoming Superhuman*, *Shareable*, and *Rogue*. He has an MBA from Drexel University and a BA from Temple University. Jeff is committed to living a life of impact and purpose. He is a board member of Pathways to Housing PA, a housing-first non-profit that believes housing is a basic human right and the best path to solving the homelessness crisis.

*The Lovable Leader: Build Great Teams with Trust, Respect, and Kindness* by Jeff Gibbard  
©2022 by Jeff Gibbard. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Page Two Books. ISBN 978-1774581766. Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® Copyright ©2023 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. 45SS04A

---