



## The Leaders We Need: And What Makes Us Follow

By Michael Maccoby



**The Leaders We Need: And What Makes Us Follow** By Michael Maccoby

A leader is someone people follow. But why do people follow? Books abound on leaders, but much less is known about followers. In *The Leaders We Need*, Maccoby steps into this yawning gap in the literature.

This insightful book shows that followers have their own powerful motivations to follow. Many relate to their leader as to some important person from the past—a parent, a sibling, a close friend. With major shifts in family structure and other social changes (especially transformations in technology and work life), these “transferences” have grown complex—making leaders’ work more challenging.

The key for modern-day leaders? Being sensitive to how a group’s collective psychology and social context shape its leadership needs. For example, factory workers in a large city during a period of relative calm would need very different leaders than people working in a star management consultancy during a time of stiffening competition. The author outlines the profound shift from a more bureaucratic society and leadership model to an interactive, collaborative one—and provides crucial advice on how to become a “leader we need.”

Offering provocative psychological insight and thoughtful analysis of social and cultural changes, this book examines leadership through an entirely new lens.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In an unusual take on America's leadership crisis, Maccoby calls for a new kind of leader: collaborators rather than stern bureaucrats, who are able to attract a new kind of follower. For workers in the information economy who are skeptical of father figures, psychoanalyst Maccoby (*Narcissistic Leaders*) advocates relationships to bosses that are less parental and more siblinglike. Exploring why people follow different leaders in different times and circumstances, he rests his analysis on Freud's concept of unconscious transference. Though Maccoby's language is straightforward, skeptics will question the book's emphasis on personality: today's workers seem too detached to see their bosses and CEOs as siblings, much less parental figures. The author moves from theory to practice in calling for exceptional leaders to find new sources of clean energy, quality education and universal health care. In a detailed, hands-on chapter, Maccoby brings together leadership, personality types and organizational design to describe how a premier health-care organization should function. But it's his chapter on the president we need—examining personality types and managing styles—that will draw attention. Maccoby makes no endorsement for 2008, but he lays out the flaws of the current president, who, he writes, has taken big gambles without fully understanding the odds or the consequences of failure. (*Nov.*)

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### Review

Times - and people - have changed. Leaders urgently need to come to terms with that fact. --The Financial Times, December 6, 2007

### About the Author

Michael Maccoby is a psychoanalyst, anthropologist, and consultant. He has advised leaders at numerous corporations, from AT&T to Volvo, as well as at institutions such as the World Bank. He is the author of classic books on leadership, including *The Leader and the Gamesman* and, more recently, *Narcissistic Leaders*.

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