



# weLEAD Book Review

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**Greater Than Yourself:  
The Ultimate Lesson of True Leadership**  
The Crown Publishing Group - 2009 (170 pages hardback)  
Author Steve Farber  
ISBN 978-0-385-52261-8

Back in early 2008, I pitched an idea to the owners of my company. The idea was to conduct a leadership management training class for any interested hourly employee at my current location. I said that I would conduct the training class on a Saturday (so it would not interfere with the normal working week) and that I would do it on my time and the employees would do it on their own time as well. I was questioned numerous times in the beginning as to why I would give up not only not being compensated, but also my Saturday mornings to conduct this training class! It was even harder for the hourly employees because of the negativity they were enduring from their co-workers. They heard comments like, "You're not going to move up in the company. You shouldn't attend unless your being paid", or "You're giving up your Saturday mornings for what, to become a manager for this company? It will never happen."

You see, I feel so strongly about my company that I want to make sure it is here forever, and the only way to do this is to make sure that the generation after me, the "Y" generation, obtains the skills necessary to sustain it as a great company for generations to come. I also wanted to ensure that my company would still be here when I am ready to retire and I knew that I could not do this alone. Actually, my burning desire to improve others came when I read *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni a few years earlier. I practiced the principles he outlined in his book with my management team and found that our individualistic management team was truly becoming a team of one. I wanted to do more; more by also teaching non-management employees how to be part of a synergized team as well.

The managers in my span of control along with the hourly employees who dedicated their time to improve themselves, had become my **Greater Than Yourself** projects as Mr. Farber describes in his book. He writes using fictitious characters and settings, but places himself within the story to allow the reader to experience his real life journey to becoming Greater Than Himself. The story captivates readers every step of the way because he uses the journey of an antique guitar that he bought at an antique shop in order to help them understand the GTY principles and how to apply them. GTY is about unselfishness really. It is about making a promise to another to teach the skills and knowledge you possess as a leader with the goal of making them better than yourself, and without expecting anything in return.

The three tenets of GTY are Expand Yourself, Give Yourself and Replicate Yourself. As he points out in the story, you cannot give yourself until you expand yourself and you cannot replicate yourself until you give yourself. Each tenet is explained fully within his story and must be completed one at a time. At the end of the book Mr. Farber gives the reader a blueprint of each tenet explained in full detail and how to begin to use them. The message is simple and powerful; help others become greater than yourself and you will become more successful along the way. I am a manager who deeply believes in making others successful and securing the future of many generations to come. I often quote, "great leaders are those who make others become better than themselves," and now I am delighted to see

that Mr. Farber has turned my belief into a story. As you read and understand this story you will have a clear understanding that in order to begin making the world a better place, it starts with you. Identify your GTY project once you read this book and give yourself unconditionally to help make the world a better place. I can speak from experience, the rewards are tremendous.

*Reviewed by Ken Altenbach*

***weLEAD Rating – highly recommended***

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