

Embrace Joyful Leadership

Use this guide to find resilience and purpose amid the frustrations of leadership.

Reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Leading with Joy: Practices for Uncertain Times.

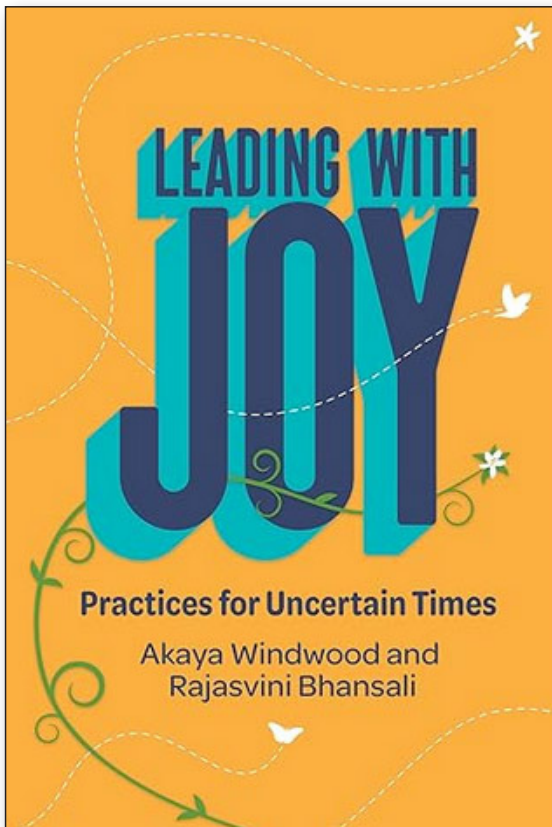
By Akaya Windwood & Rajasvini Bhansali. Softcover. 206 pages. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com.

Working with others is complex. Mistakes will happen, and leadership must be relinquished from time to time, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy leading.

Joy in leadership comes from knowing we're making a difference in our intended work. We can find joy in experimenting, learning together, and building trust. We can find joy in healing and forgiveness, as individuals and as teams.

This book is for any leader committed to the long and often seemingly slow job of creating a society that works for all. The book's intent is for individuals to strengthen their leadership skills and build confidence in applying them to their organizations.

Leading with Joy takes the reader through a journey covering many aspects of leadership. It asks us to reflect and to relate through stories. Storytelling proves critical because leadership is a lifelong process involving others.



Questions for Reflection

Throughout *Leading with Joy*, the authors offer questions to illuminate how various aspects of leadership apply to your own experience. A few examples:

Where, when, and why have you said “yes” to something that depleted your time and energy?

Are the people around you the best people to support your purpose?


How do you decide that it's time to let something go?

What stories have you been told or are you telling yourself that may not be true?

Do the structures around you allow you to thrive as a leader?

Is there anything that needs to shift, begin, or end?

The authors, leadership trainers with diverse experiences, explore where and how joy can be found or created within the work. They suggest many places to find affirming ways of responding to social-justice challenges. Sometimes it's in the way we interact with people, sometimes it means activities that help us regenerate. Readers are encouraged to find ways to sustain themselves from the authors' suggestions – or to find their own. Throughout the book, Windwood and Bhansali remind us that how we respond in leadership roles will model the behavior for others, whether we're intentional about it or not. So, taking reflective time for ourselves will demonstrate we care about the emotional and physical health of all.

There is joy in effective leadership. It includes strategic risk, imagination, trust, respecting others, remembering to celebrate, and allowing ourselves to grieve when we need to. *Leading With Joy* can give us the confidence to face our imperfect social environments and do what we can to improve them. 

Terrence Fernsler, MNPL, PhD, has been a nonprofit professional for over 40 years. He is currently an instructor and advisor in the James Madison University Nonprofit Studies minor program, and instructor in Nonprofit Management and Leadership for the Master of Public Administration program in the Bush School of Government and Policy's Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy at Texas A&M University.