Dr. Markus Ebner

Positive Leadership

**Leading successfully
with PERMA-Lead:
the five keys
to high-performance**

*With a foreword
by Kim Cameron*

facultas

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the five keys to high performance**

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Dr. Markus Ebner is a trained coach and a psychologist. He teaches at the Universities of Vienna and Klagenfurt and is specialized in the field of Positive Psychology. He is one of the leading experts for Positive Leadership in Europe; his work connects science and day-to-day-practice. Dr. Ebner and his team have accompanied high-level organizations and companies for more than 20 years and help people to recognize their strengths and develop their potential.

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Foreword to English Edition by Prof. Kim Cameron

I became interested in Positive Leadership as a result of studying organizational downsizing in the USA during the 1980s and 1990s. In those research projects, I discovered that a large majority of organizations that abolished jobs, eliminated employees, and retrenched operations also experienced a variety of dysfunctional outcomes, including increased conflict, restricted communication, escalating politicking, scapegoating leaders, destruction of trust, worsening morale, and so forth. As you would expect, the emergence of these factors produced declining performance in the vast majority of downsizing organizations.

However, I observed a few organizations that thrived. Despite the fact that employees were involuntarily terminated and that unpleasant decisions had to be made, these organizations flourished. At the time, I had little empirical data to back up my hunch, but I began forming an impression that the organizations that flourished after downsizing were led by what I referred to as *positive leaders*. Positive leaders demonstrated, among other things, virtuous practices such as compassion, forgiveness,

gratitude, trustworthiness, optimism, integrity, and so forth.

Because at the time, Positive Leadership appeared to be so rare in organizations, I embarked on a research program focused on investigating the effects of Positive Leadership on employees and on their organizations. The results were quite dramatic and unequivocal: When Positive Leadership practices were demonstrated in organizations, not only do employees flourish but organizational performance increases dramatically. That is, significant increases were observed in profitability, productivity, quality, innovation, customer loyalty, and employee engagement. The results of that research were quite compelling: Positive Leadership makes a significant difference in the performance of organizations and their employees.

An array of adjectives have been associated with leadership over the years such as humble, servant, charismatic, visionary, situational, transformational, transactional, authentic, participative, autocratic, considerate, task oriented, narcissistic, laissez faire, paternalistic, and so forth. Each of these descriptors emphasizes a certain set of styles, behaviors, approaches, or strategies. Positive Leadership has been introduced more recently because it emphasizes attributes not taken seriously heretofore. This is one reason this book by Dr. Markus Ebner is such a welcome contribution to the leadership literature.

The emphasis of Positive Leadership is on helping organizations and their employees realize their highest potential, achieve extraordinarily positive performance, attain positive deviance, and reach a virtuous state. The word virtuous refers to the best of the human condition, or the highest aspirations human being hold for themselves.

In music, for example, virtuosos are the best, most inspiring performers. In art, virtuosity is the most uplifting, inspiring art. Positive Leadership is aimed at helping individuals and organizations achieve a state of virtuousness—or attain their highest aspirations.

In this well-written and helpful book, Markus Ebner focuses specifically on aspects of Positive Leadership that enhance five important outcomes— Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. These attributes were introduced by Martin Seligman in his book, *Flourish*, in which he proposed that these five attributes characterize individuals who experience flourishing in their lives. The acronym PERMA represents these five outcomes.

In this book, Markus Ebner provides an interesting and engaging explanation of the PERMA model, its relationship to other attributes of well-being, and, especially, the empirical foundation for its effectiveness in accounting for positive outcomes in individuals and organizations. He developed a reliable and useful assessment instrument— PERMA-Lead—that can be administered by leaders and organizations to guide their improvement efforts. Unlike many books dealing with the various adjectives associated with leadership, Markus Ebner provides empirical evidence that PERMA-Lead makes a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and their organizations. He shows, for example, that when leaders follow his prescriptions regarding Positive Leadership, employee sick days diminish, client spending increases, customer evaluation scores increase, leaders are more creative, less stress and burnout occurs, and organizations perform better. The case made for the usefulness and importance of PERMA-Lead is certainly worth the price of the book.

Importantly, the strength of the book lies in the host of very practical tools and techniques for implementing each of the PERMA-Lead attributes. The book is a must-read for leaders, consultants, and change agents who are interested in helping employees flourish, reach their highest potential, and achieve extraordinary success. Positive Leadership is a key, and Markus Ebner provides a treasure trove of helpful suggestions and prescriptions for attaining those ends.

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Foreword to German Edition by Prof. Erich Kirchler

Every coin has two sides. This insight does not protect us from frequently admiring one side and forgetting the other!

Rarely are possible choices clearly good or bad, events clearly advantageous or disadvantageous, developments clearly positive or negative. "Good" and "bad" are often close together. Evaluations of complex decisions result from the theory that people can perceive and analyze all available information. Everyday life, however, undermines the assumption that judgments result from rational decisions based on completely processing information.

In complex worlds with ambiguous and often contradictory circumstances, we limit information before making a judgement; we orient ourselves to clear signals and ignore background noise. We focus our attention on certain issues and neglect others unnoticed in the shadows.

When we evaluate events, we delve only into details that correspond to our convictions, confirm our expectations, and therefore save ourselves the trouble of questioning and revising our views. This applies not only to everyday decisions and ideological interpretations of social events,

but also to the sciences that focus on specific phenomena and reduce their complexity in order to understand them. Even scientists who study people's experiences and behavior will focus on certain aspects and disregards others. This is not only because of our limited cognitive abilities, but also from our preset opinions about what motivates people. Finally, our perspectives are shaped by intellectual trends and the possibility to be heard in our own scholarly community.

Psychology has long focused on human inadequacies, deviations from the norm, and the correction of negative experiences and behaviors. Markus Ebner's "A Story from 1899" in Chapter 3 impressively shows the consequences of well-meaning theory and pointing a finger at weaknesses.

Positive Psychology has drawn attention to the tendency in academic psychology to forget one side of the coin; therefore, it advocates emphasizing and promoting people's strengths. The effect is not only evident in better performance, but also in well-being. Markus Ebner, a convinced proponent of Positive Psychology, has made a great contribution to bringing its strengths and positive effects into leadership research and practice.

This book not only demonstrates that Markus Ebner has a solid understanding of theory, but also that he successfully engages in practical work and convincingly combines real-life experiences with theory. The interplay between theory and practice and the constant adaptation of theoretical considerations as well as the refinement of counseling and intervention strategies guarantee that his findings and his work are constantly updated. It also provides an example of continually questioning one's own views, of striving for

improvement, of testing theoretically based strategies, and of evaluating them critically.

Markus Ebner focuses on certain topics. However, this is not to confirm his own opinion but only to reduce to a "manageable level" the complexity of leadership and interaction with employees. This volume shows that the roots of successful leadership lie in the in-depth knowledge of provocative research on leadership, its translation into practical work, and the critical examination of one's own views in the dialogue with leaders in various organizations. His work has resulted in the PERMA-Lead Model: a leadership model based on positive feelings, engagement and autonomy, relationships empowering people in organizations, meaningfulness of activities, and accomplishing goals.

Leadership means exerting influence. Markus Ebner emphasizes this in the first lines of this book. In fact, this awareness and the resulting responsibility are not self-evident. The power conferred on leaders calls for a trust based on competence, congruence of values with those led, empathy, and goodwill. At a time when the good man has become discredited and it seems that the opposite of good is good, the demand for the trustworthy handling of power in leadership positions is correct, indispensable, and courageous.

In a time of neoliberalism, some people with personalities shaped by high narcissism, Machiavellianism, and a significant amount of psychopathy have become successful. Those who are convinced of their greatness, who act ruthlessly, and who break rules are considered by some to be strongly assertive. These charismatic people have tremendous energy and impressive determination—and

they are a danger. Not only in economic organizations do they proudly ascend with their "Dark Triad" to the executive levels, but in the political arena these figures also are highly visible, extremely loud, and seemingly invincible. They win over their followers by persuading them how badly they have been treated so far and how badly they are and will be treated if they do not confide in them, how much as their leader they understand their situation, that they have what it takes to improve, and they tell fake facts inventively so that all those not sharing their opinion should be considered their common enemy. Taboos are broken without fear; so-called personal realities are created by specifically suppressing facts and abolishing discussion with dissenters.

Positive Leadership means taking responsibility, focusing on strengths and well-being, empathy and credibility, reflecting critically on one's own point of view, and asking what might be outside one's own field of attention. Markus Ebner shows in his book how this works and how successful it is.

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Introduction

"How manipulative is leadership?" I have asked this question at the start of many workshops for managers in recent years. Of course, this wording is provocative—and that is also my intention. Manipulation is something immoral, right? And no manager would like to classify their role as morally questionable! But when the thesaurus suggests the terms "influence" or "steer" as synonyms for "manipulate," then it becomes clear: Of course, a main function of leadership is to do exactly that. People constantly influence each other. Our colleagues leave an impression on us, our friends' opinions can bring new thoughts, and even the neighbors, who greet us or not, influence how we behave towards them. Situations, environmental conditions, or roles attributed to us shape us. Why else would people behave so differently in different life situations?

Therefore, I am firmly convinced that as managers we must face up to the facts: Yes, we influence people, and that is a relevant part of our job! Only when we become aware of this fact does it become clear what this responsibility entails. The influence takes place, whether we want it or not. Just think of a situation in the past where a supervisor gave you positive or negative feedback on something

important to you. Maybe you had this comment in your head even a few days later. Sometimes a single sentence has an effect that lasts for hours, sometimes even days. A mostly grumpy supervisor, who interprets every mistake as a personal attack, manipulates the team just like a manager whose simple presence motivates and who inspires above-average engagement with the work.

In my opinion, managers aware of their role and their task to be a positive influence make the difference between leadership and "everyday manipulation," i.e., accidental, unintended mutual influence. At the same time, an above-average level of empathy and self-perception is necessary to avoid as much unintended negative influence as possible. I do not believe that supervisors go to the office to lower the mood, reduce motivation to a minimum, and destroy every form of initiative and commitment. Yet it happens. Daily! In most cases, this is not the intention, I hope at least. But if it happens unintentionally and thus not purposefully, then a lack of leadership competence and manipulation of daily life have contributed to destroying work performance.

Managers thus have an indivisible responsibility to recognize how they influence their employees favorably or unfavorably by shaping their roles and behaviors. Good leadership is therefore its own bundle of competences—a specific combination of partial competences—which, as in any other profession, can be good or less good. Therefore, if a manager's task is to help create, through his management style, an atmosphere conducive to work in a team, then this clearly involves special knowledge: a leadership expertise. Excellent managers have the skills to recognize and promote their employees' potential and to

create an environment in which they the workers, the organization, and even the society can develop. And, this is the starting point of Positive Leadership.

Positive Leadership is thus the leadership competence to create a working environment in which employees want to use and develop their strengths, to be involved in what they do, feel valued for their work, identify with their job, and thus feel motivated not only to orient themselves to the required performance, but also to contribute—to go the extra mile. Not infrequently, employees jump into their new assignment with the energy and motivation of a tiger, only to end up as a bedside rug after a few months. Something went wrong in this case.

The key to using and strengthening the available energy is to use and develop resources already available in people, in the team, or in the organization. Often these resources are not known or have not yet been needed. However, using these resources allows everyone to win: employees, managers, organizations, and ultimately society. The average manager mostly guides, controls, and feels satisfied with that routine. Great managers, in contrast, see their task in providing employees with significant support in developing their particular potentials.

Does this seem like a socially romantic idea that does not make sense and cannot be practiced in reality? Not true, as I am going to show you in this book. In recent years, more and more companies define and live this approach as the basis for their management principles. Numerous consultants, executives, personnel developers, and managers use Positive Leadership to help their employees become more committed, more productive, and ultimately happier. Clearly, for those who see their primary role as

"managing" rather than leading people, this approach is probably unrealistic. These "administrators" may indeed have the impression that they must only administer the employees. Nonetheless, it is wrong to see employees as something mechanical, as computers, or other objects in the workplace. Therefore, a relevant difference between "management" and "leadership" is that employees are human beings and therefore also have human needs, feelings, and—if it suits them—engagement with work, which comes from within and not only when activated from outside. Computers cannot do that. So, it makes a big difference whether someone has the competence to manage something or the ability to lead people. If someone can plan, among other things, the highest possible personnel hours for a new project to achieve as soon as possible the ROI (Return on Investment), then this demonstrates an important management competence. But when the project is running, the abstract personnel hours suddenly become a specific Ms. Smith and a Mr. Miller, and then the management needs other skills.

Something is fundamentally wrong when 85 percent of business women in a large survey state that they are just functioning, rather than flourishing in a job,[1] 97 percent of all managers obviously overestimate their own abilities and consider themselves to be good when only around 30 percent of people report good experiences with managers, [2] and Gallup 2016 calculates that poor managers in Germany cause damage of around 105 billion euros through their effect on employees.[3] Unlocking potentials while only correcting weaknesses is like waiting at the bus stop for the next train.

To work successfully with employees, you need competencies other than just good management qualities. If you are looking for motivating leadership, and if you want to know what high-performance teams do differently from average or perhaps even below-average teams, then this book will deepen your understanding of a leadership approach that has the tools to do it. Positive Leadership, as part of the scientific discipline "Positive Psychology," evaluates the effect of this approach through serious research. The hypotheses have been practiced in the real world to see whether (or not) they are true. Although the Positive Leadership approach is still quite young, many well-founded studies now show its significantly positive effects on job satisfaction, performance, turnover, and even on health and many other issues.

This book provides insight into the relevant research results from around the world on Positive Leadership. It investigates the roots of this leadership approach and identifies how leadership can be (even) better. Many people may know this management approach as "strength-orientated" leadership. This is only part of the truth, the concept has enlarged. Research on this subject has grown rapidly in recent years. Any search for this term in scientific databases will show thousands of publications worldwide; new ones are added every month. Today, we know much more, and in more detail, about Positive Leadership. Nevertheless: If Positive Leadership would be a meal in a restaurant, then scientific research has only begun on the appetizers. In this book, I would therefore like to present PERMA-Lead, a Positive Leadership approach that enables managers to assess their personal situation. Based on five specific areas, the multitude of suggestions offer managers insights on how to successfully

apply this leadership style in their own practice. And, I would like to give you a good basis of research findings in this area that relate to management.

With my second book (*Positive Leadership in Action*), you can complete your knowledge about this topic. In it you will find tried and tested tools and techniques that belong in the toolbox of a Positive Leader. With these descriptions, I would also like to inspire trainers, coaches, consultants, and others to use these approaches in their work. I deliberately chose a colorful mix of simpler strategies, such as strength-oriented feedback, and more elaborate methods, such as the GROW model. Some of these techniques have been developed by other colleagues and my team and myself have—partially modified—put into practice. We have developed other tools in recent years and refined them in numerous coaching sessions, seminars and through feedback from experience. What all technologies have in common is that they have proven themselves successfully in day-to-day management.

In the second book, companies and organizations provide case studies of the relevance of Positive Leadership. Different projects will be described, stories will be told and there will be a varied insight into daily practice. When selecting the companies, I also consciously paid attention to diversity. This resulted in a wide variety of examples from international corporations, smaller organizations, social institutions, profit-oriented companies as well as from the public sector or charitable associations. But what all organizations have in common, despite their differences, is that they have something exciting to offer on the subject of "Positive Leadership." It is not a question of everything being perfect in these companies. Perfection in all areas

can only be found in stories, films, or fantasy—certainly not where we live. Rather, that book is about companies successfully implementing best practices. Positive Leadership is also about this best-practice logic: to take a close look when something has worked, then analyze the exact ingredients and cook with these ingredients—and season a little to your taste.

The ultimate goal is to establish Positive Leadership as a leadership and organizational culture. First and foremost, this requires a clear stance, a positive attitude as well as an understanding of the manager's role aligned to this approach. I do not believe that a leadership style can only be established sustainably on one level of the methodology, i.e., the collection of tools or the planned use of techniques. Therefore, the first step is anchoring the "how" for this leadership approach in an understanding of "the reason why." Only in the second step does teaching specific techniques begin. The optimal combination is basing leadership behavior on a knowledge-based foundation. Not all managers can cope in the same way with this change process in leadership culture; the changes' varying levels of difficulty may significantly relate to the manager's personality. In this book, I explain these difficulties by using various research results— including my own findings, published here for the first time. The fact that the manager's self-image rarely coincides with the employee's perception, and some other results of our research on Positive Leadership indicates possible (even your own) stumbling blocks. But first and foremost, this book should inspire you to use a variety of ideas to expand your possibilities for action.

In my professional activities I often feel like a traveler between two worlds. On the one hand, I teach in the field of "Applied Economic and Organizational Psychology" at the University of Vienna and at the Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt. There, I have built up a part of my professional identity, which also includes clearly separating scientific knowledge from pseudo-knowledge, hypotheses, or fake news. This setting places essential importance on alpha levels and beta errors, reliability, variance analyses, and other scientifically relevant concepts.

On the other hand, I have been working in the field of "Training, Coaching and Management Consulting" for quite some time. This world requires me to respond to managers who, understandably, seek specific practical tools useful to their organization. They often ask for very simple models. People often consider models or explanations to be correct if they are logical and understandable and best match their personal experience or their moral values. This is where a particular form of marketing comes into play. In this environment, I repeatedly encounter creative leadership models or, even bolder, seemingly scientifically sound diagnostic tools or 360° feedback that can be classified as careless with the truth. Simply because a model can be represented as a pyramid, overlapping circles, or in different colors does not mean it represents reality. Science uses models to come as close as possible to the truth, but never claims to know the truth. This sometimes leads to scientific models being rejected in favor of better models. These rigorous challenges do not even spare approaches known beyond the scientific realm, such as Maslow's pyramid of needs.[4]

In my work with managers, I often hear people describe themselves as "more the practitioner than the theorist." It is as if these two areas were unrelated. In fact, the optimal basis for practical action is knowledge. Especially leadership and thus a task in which you, by definition, influence other people, I see it as a moral obligation to act on a knowledge base that goes beyond your own life experience. Isn't that tedious? Yes, I for sure! But would you trust a doctor who has no long-term medical training because it was too tedious to study? Or an electrician who lays the wires in your house according to intuition and personal theories? Exactly! With this book, I would therefore like to help show the practical side of scientific research and, above all, how it can be used in real day-to-day management. This is because Positive Leadership is a leadership approach very closely linked to applying scientific research. Therefore, an introductory chapter is dedicated to the importance of science for "real life."

For the sake of better readability, I do not use the usual scientific citation method in this book, but instead refer to the respective source or to further reading literature in endnotes sorted by chapters. Furthermore, for the same reason, I have tended to opt for the generally understandable term and against the scientifically exact term for several possible formulations. My aim was to prepare scientifically based knowledge in a practical form for users and that I can change from being a traveler between two worlds to a mediator between two worlds. A third decision to facilitate readability was not to use gender in this book. Wherever possible, I use neutral designations. In all other cases, I use the male form, except for an explicit mention of a difference between men and women.

Every journey begins with the first step. No matter whether the destination is the supermarket around the corner or a village on the other side of the world. Even if you plan a stroll through the city without a defined destination, it always begins with the first step. Sometimes I hear that "that" is great but cannot be implemented in my own organization. This is then followed with a multitude of justifications. The helpful question, after all, is: Which part of Positive Leadership can be implemented? The village at the other end of the world may not be the destination, but the supermarket around the corner might be a good start. And then maybe start again tomorrow. And then again. Positive Leadership is not about "everything or nothing." Nor is it an issue of specifically intervening once, but of integrating at least parts of this leadership approach and keeping up with it. Most people who mainly eat fast food would probably find it impossible to change permanently their complete diet starting tomorrow. This may be true even if they know that their current diet will create considerable problems in the medium term. But if they manage to integrate a single carrot into their diet every day, that would be 365 carrots a year. This would total about 40 kilograms of carrots that this person would otherwise not have eaten. And this is exactly what Positive Leadership is all about.

After this first "getting to know" phase, the next step is a consistent and lasting implementation. To stick with the example of a healthy diet: Eating broccoli once will not be enough to cover your long-term need for vitamin C. The same applies when people or organizations want to change. Like a change in eating habits, an organizational change is a longer process and not a fireworks display. If companies want to introduce Positive Leadership as an organizational

culture, this is not like visiting a garage to exchange worn tires for new ones. Rather, it is a change in the value system that can also encounter resistance. Moreover, old and new values will coexist for some time, which may create problems. The recipe for success is to stay the course: take one step, establish it and make it a habit, and then take the next step. This is the basis for sustainable and lasting change and therefore also applies to establishing Positive Leadership.

With this in mind, I wish you many exciting moments, insights, and a desire to test them after (or while) reading!

Markus Ebner

1 Eminence-Based, Evidence-Based, and the Barnum Effect: A plea for science!

"People who have crossed their arms are either negative or closed." This is one of many myths found in pseudo-scientific advice books. Nevertheless, not a single serious study confirms this hypothesis. The reality is more complex, as you probably know from your experience. There can be many reasons why someone crosses their arms; for example, because it is cold in the room or simply because it is comfortable. All you must do is take yourself as an example: How many times have you crossed your arms and been anything but self-absorbed? Perhaps in this posture you have even listened with great interest to someone. Conclusion: One cannot reduce the variety of a person's body language to one signal and derive some meaning from it. Otherwise, misinterpretations may occur.

Especially when it comes to supposed psychological knowledge, a true field of myths opens up: Highly gifted intellectuals allegedly have more relationship problems, autistic people are often highly gifted, the handwriting says something about a person's personality, more acts of violence are committed during a full moon. And you may

also have heard that some people think predominantly with the left brain and others do so with the right. All these assumptions have one thing in common: either there is no proof or they are refuted.[1] A professor of business psychology, Uwe Peter Kanning, has rendered outstanding services in revealing the use of pseudoscience in personnel selection and personnel management. A study of 1688 people, which he conducted together with colleagues, revealed that most interviewees consider the previously mentioned statements to be true.[1] This has serious implications. Just think of a personnel decision based on a graphological "expert opinion." This study also shows that education pays off: people with higher education are less susceptible to falling for pseudo-scientific statements.

Speaking of education: Do you know whether you are more of a visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or other type of learner? This theory came from Neil Fleming, a New Zealand teacher and school inspector, and became very popular in the 1990s. If you do not know your learning style, it is not a failure. Because here, too, it is a myth, as we now know. Although more than 90 percent of teachers from England to Turkey to China[2] believe in this theory, it is unfortunately not true. Serious studies have used various methods to test this approach, which seems so logical and convincing. The research concludes: It may be an interesting hypothesis, but people cannot be divided into these learning styles.[3-6]

How is it that so much nonsense exists publicly as supposed knowledge or even as proven fact? The answer is relatively simple: it would be too time-consuming or even impossible to research all the topics in detail or even to personally carry out investigations. Therefore, we usually depend on trusting what experts tell us. No distinction is

made between an assumption or an established fact. If it is interesting for us, perhaps even corresponding with our life experience or our value system, then we now have expert proof. The sooner we grant expert status to a person with more experience or a higher rank or a certain education, the sooner we consider their opinions to be established facts. This effect increases with an academic title in front of the name, highly promoted presentations, or personal status. "Eminence-based" is the half-joking term for this unchecked revaluation of expert opinions. Something is called true because it corresponds to the view of a person credited with appropriate expertise.

Science has established another approach that supports decisions and develops theories based on social science data obtained with the best designed studies and analytical methods. This relatively complex process must adhere to scientific standards. For example, the hypothesis that highly gifted individuals have more relationship problems than average is tested on large samples and compared to average individuals. Using statistical evaluation methods, the hypothesis is tested based on the data and finally rejected (= the data speaks against the hypothesis) or accepted (= it is probable that the hypothesis is correct). Scientifically educated people can see how concisely or how clearly this decision has been made based on the essential data. The so-called gold standard—the best procedure— in science is subsequently subjecting this study to a peer review, a procedure little known outside the research community. A detailed description of the study, the justification of the hypotheses, and the results are usually sent anonymously to several experts, who give their feedback and identify points of criticism. The study can be published only when these experts judge the study as

scientifically correct. Despite this system's high workload and vulnerabilities, it still is a valuable approach to ensuring the reliability and scientific soundness of knowledge.

It is understandable that this approach is required in medicine (keyword "evidence-based medicine"). The safest way to determine whether a new drug has a better effect than an older one is to give a group of people the old drug, a second group the new drug and-if ethically possible-a third group a placebo, a sham drug without an active substance. This study design allows a precise assessment of whether the new medicine would be better. Even the placebo effect can be calculated with the results of the third group.

When it comes to leadership, most cases usually invoke eminence-based techniques. If you are a frequent visitor to bookstores, you have certainly noticed the booming market for leadership and management literature. You will find books by people who report on their own success story as managers, right next to leadership literature by horse experts, in between there are even some exciting leadership tips from former athletes, and also what you can learn from climbing the north face for your daily leadership routine. You now have the agony of deciding whether your team performs more like athletes or horses or even a cliff. It is therefore high time to also demand evidence-based leadership.[7,8]

Science conveys seriousness, sound foundation, and a certain level of accuracy. This approach is now used as a Trojan horse when it comes to economic interests. I see a particular problem when management or leadership diagnostic tools have recently found their way into many