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# Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders

By Jennifer Garvey Berger, Keith Johnston



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Jennifer Garvey Berger, Keith Johnston

When faced with complex challenges or uncertain outcomes, many leaders believe that if they are smart enough, work hard enough, or turn to the best management tools, they will be able to find the right answer, predict and plan for the future, and break down tasks to produce controllable results. But what are leaders to do when this isn't the case? Rather than offering one-size-fits-all tips and tricks drawn from the realm of business as usual, *Simple Habits for Complex Times* provides three integral practices that enable leaders to navigate the unknown. By taking multiple perspectives, asking different questions, and seeing more of their system, leaders can better understand themselves, their roles, and the world around them. They can become more nimble, respond with agility, and guide their organizations to thrive in an ever-shifting business landscape. The more leaders use these simple habits, the more they enhance their performance and solve increasingly common, sticky business issues with greater acumen. Whether in large or small organizations, in government or the private sector, in the U.S. or overseas, leaders will turn to this book as a companion that helps them grow into the best version of themselves.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"This book is a superb exploration of the ways that complexity calls on leaders to think, act, and engage differently. It will leave you with a few simple, yet powerful, habits that will change you as a leader . . . and a person. A landmark work!" (Michael Rennie, Global Leader, McKinsey & Company)

"[Berger and Johnston] focus on several perspectives and actions that leaders can use to guide their organizations through difficult times . . . This well-written and well-researched book will especially appeal to those in leadership positions who are looking for effective tools to deal with change and challenges . . . Recommended" (T. R. Gillespie *CHOICE*)

"Faced with dramatic change, leaders in all sectors must boldly think anew. As a woman from the global south, leading a large global non-government organization, I need new models and approaches to leading in this new world. Keith and Jennifer offer me stimulating and refreshing advice on how I can think and act differently to achieve enduring change." (Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director *Oxfam International*)

"Berger and Johnston offer a refreshing and bold take on meeting the challenges of leadership, fearlessly slaying sacred cows of previous theories to illuminate a model for the emerging future." (Erica Ariel Fox *New York Times* bestselling author of *Winning From Within*)

"*Simple Habits for Complex Times* gives us a glimpse into the future?providing practical approaches not only to cope with complexity, but to learn and thrive in it. Practicing these simple, counterintuitive habits will enable leaders to grow past their limits. If you're serious about maximizing your leadership potential, this is a terrific book." (Larry Clark, Vice President of Talent Management and Development *Comcast Cable*)

"Garvey Berger and Johnston are superb *teachers*! *Simple Habits for Complex Times* is a perfect blend of 'story' and 'lesson.' You'll keep turning the pages and the pages will turn you into a better leader." (Robert Kegan *Harvard University* and co-author of *Immunity to Change*)

"This is mandatory reading if you want a shot at navigating complexity with grace. Jennifer and Keith render complexity visible, accessible, and workable. We all know about the pressures of uncertainty and the rapid pace of change, but 'the how' of being a leader has been unfathomable?until now. " (Gayle Karen K. Young, Chief Talent and Culture Officer *Wikimedia Foundation*)

"This is the perfect guide to corporate transformation. Changing consumption patterns are turning business models upside down. Garvey Berger and Johnston show you how to drain the swamp of ambiguity, squarely face unexpected challenges, and seize new opportunities." (Eric Passmore, Chief Technology Officer, Online Publishing and Media *Microsoft Corporation*)

"Three cheers!!! This book doesn't just tell you how. It shows you how to become a more effective leader in conditions of complexity and vulnerability?in other words, circumstances that we face all the time. Rather than a simple recipe that fits some adolescent dream of perfection, it's an invitation into lifelong learning that will transform you and your organization. Welcome! All aboard?" (William R. Torbert, Boston College and Principal)

## About the Author

Jennifer Garvey Berger and Keith Johnston are founding partners of Cultivating Leadership, a global leadership consultancy. Jennifer is the author of *Changing on the Job*. Keith is the former Global Chair of Oxfam International. Follow them on [CultivatingLeadership.com](http://CultivatingLeadership.com).

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