The Big Idea
Are you accomplishing what you want as a leader?

Why do some leaders get and accomplish what they want, while others seem to regularly experience frustration and setbacks? Why do some leaders achieve their goals, while others barely hang in there?

Based on his groundbreaking psychological study of ways that successful individuals think and behave, Dr. Henry Cloud presents a simple yet profound roadmap to help leaders – and those who want to become leaders – to arrive at greater levels of personal growth and corporate influence that they thought were possible.

The good news for all of us is that leadership success is not limited to vague notions of “charisma” or traditional advantages like graduate degrees and connections. It is much more closely tied to a pattern of thinking and moving forward that learns from mistakes and stays focused on goals.

Why You Need This Book

This book will help you discover the secrets that will help you focus on the dynamics that make a difference in your organization – and your life.

Get ready to go to the next level – and take others with you!

Déjà Vu Leaders

We are all very different. A good number of us are in business or other arenas of leadership, but we have different backgrounds, different personalities, different economic circumstances, and different abilities. However, this set of people are the same in that they share this particular way of handling life and work. And that commonality is the déjá vu experience.

Pondering this phenomenon, three realizations can come into focus:
**Realization number one:** The answer to “Who is this person?” was not a person at all. It was a way of behaving.

**Realization number two:** People who found what they were looking for in life seemed to do a certain set of things in common.

**Realization number three:** If you were not born with these patterns for leadership in place, you can learn them.

Thus, they exist on their own and are available to all of us. You can learn these patterns that work every time and lead to a better life.

1. Excavate Your Soul

   **Déjà vu leaders explore their deep hearts and invest in their inner desires and drives**

For successful leaders, the invisible world is where the real life is. The same is true at all levels of leadership in the business world. Every blockbuster deal, every new rung on the corporate ladder, every project design, every company merger, and every successful sales campaign begins in the invisible soul of human beings. Leadership success is the process of digging up the treasures of the invisible soul in order to bring dreams, desires, and talents into the visible world.

In order to optimize his opportunities in business and life, the déjà vu leader:

- Becomes aware of his dreams, desires, talents, and other treasures of the soul.
- Listens to them and values them as life itself.
- Takes steps to develop them, beginning in very small ways.
- Does not care as much about his results as his essence, but just continues to express his soul-treasures wherever he can.

In order to get to the outside visible world, your desires and talents have to be mined, refined, and sculpted. You have to own them, work them, and use them. Here are some tips on how to do that:

- Listen to what bugs you. It might be a message.
- Don’t let negative feelings just sit there. Do something about them.
- Don’t let long-term wishes and dreams go ignored. Find out what they mean.
- Listen to your symptoms. They might be telling you that you have something to dig up.
- Pay attention to your fantasies. They may be telling you that something is missing which you need to resolve in appropriate ways.
- Face the fears and obstacles that have caused you to bury your inner treasures.
- Don’t confuse envy with desire. You may be envious of someone else’s position or success because you have lost touch with your own dreams.
- Do everything above in the context of your values and the community of people who are committed to guarding your heart. If you do not have such a community, find one and join it.
2. Yank the Diseased Tooth

*Déjà vu leaders do not allow negative things to take up space in their lives*

There are major negative things that can afflict us, really bad stuff. Sometimes, the negative energy comes from things not innately bad, but not best for the person involved either. These minor negatives distract you from attaining those deepest desires in your heart or moving towards the most important things in life. But they can spoil your dreams as readily as the big stuff.

Either fill the cavity or pull the tooth. And the sooner the better. Then new energy, resources, time, and space become available to you to focus on the things that have life in them. The negative energy drain is stopped, making room for the good stuff.

So, here is the sad result of not living like a déjà vu leader: You get the negative emotions of all your problems without the benefits of solving them. Avoidance is really not helping anything, because you still expend the energy and feel the hurt. If you had simply yanked the bad tooth when it started bothering you, you would be over the pain by now. Avoidance always prolongs the pain.

Listen to the little voice inside that tells you things like:

- This doesn't quite feel right.
- I don’t feel comfortable doing this or agreeing to this.
- This is not what I really want.
- This violates an important value.
- I’m going to resent this for a long time.
- I wish this were not happening.

3. Play the Whole Movie

*Déjà vu leaders evaluate their decisions in the present based on how they will affect the future.*

Déjà vu leaders evaluate almost everything they do in this way. They see every behavior and decision as links in a larger chain, steps in a direction that has a destination. And they see these links in directions, the good and the bad. They think of ways to attain the good things they want in life and to avoid the bad things they don’t want. In short, they rarely do anything without thinking of the ultimate consequences. They play the whole movie, so to speak.

Playing the whole movie can save your life by preventing bad things from happening, and it can build your life by enabling you to see the good things that can happen.

In addition to motivation, playing the whole movie provides successful leaders with another strategy common to all of them. They use it to live out the difficulties before they actually occur. In other words, they worry ahead of time, meaning they play the movie and then take active steps to make sure they are ready for unpleasant scenes when they arrive.
So plot a movie, a vision of your life, your career, your relationships, your finances, and so on. See it, plan it, and then evaluate each scene you write every day in light of where the movie is supposed to end.

4. Put Superman Out of a Job

Déjà vu leaders continually ask themselves, “What can I do to make this situation better?”

Déjà vu leaders tend to call on themselves as the first source to correct difficult situations. It doesn’t matter whether they think they are to blame or not. Even if someone else is at fault, they take the initiative to address the problem and seek a solution. Whatever the answer may be, déjà vu leaders make a move.

If it takes money to make money (a common excuse), then go raise the money you need. Don’t just sit there wishing for a bigger budget.

If the economy is lousy, don’t wait for it to change. Gain a skill in a different field, look somewhere else, find another niche that is hot, enlarge your network or openness to other jobs, start your own service business, or something. Don’t just sit around and wait.

5. Embrace Your Inner Insect

Déjà vu leaders achieve big goals by taking small steps over time.

The biggest enemy of the small-steps-big-results principle is our craving for having it all. If the ant picks up a grain of sand, the city will be built. But if the ant looks at the grain and says, “That is not a city! What a waste of time!” there will be no city in the end.

All-or-nothing thinking keeps people stuck in destructive ruts. All success is built and sustained just like a building is built, one brick at a time. But one brick seems too small and insignificant for all-or-nothing thinkers. They want it all NOW, and one brick, one dollar, one pound, one new customer, is not enough for them.

Déjà vu leaders are different. They value the little increments, the tiny steps. Wanting it now keeps you from having it. Taking the long road, one tiny step at a time, will actually get you there faster because you will not lose time by trying shortcuts.

6. Earn a Black Belt in Hate

Déjà vu leaders develop the ability to hate the right things as well.

Choosing what you hate is serious business. What you do not hate well is going to find its way into your life. Here are some tips that déjà vu leaders would offer:

Make your values intentional. Think about situations you have found to be hurtful, and what you should see as worthy of taking a stand against in order to protect what you love.
Deal with your subjective hatred. Find the sources of your subjective hatred and make them objective. Put names and faces to the origins of your problematic feelings and attitudes.

Mix hate with love and respect. A déjà vu leader shows up with what we call integrated character. In other words, when he brings his hate, he brings his love as well. His hate is integrated with his love and other values, such as respect for people, kindness, and forgiveness. That is how he can take a hard stand on a tough issue but remain loving and kind in the process.

Build your skills. One thing that déjà vu leaders always do well is resolve conflict, and that means being honest and assertive without losing control, getting manipulated, or freaking out.

Whether you are going to hate is not an option. In the process, you will preserve most of the good things in your life, eliminate most of the destructive things, and experience much more success in your work and in your life.

7. Forget About Playing Fair

Déjà vu leaders give back better than they are given.

People who succeed in leadership and life do not go around settling scores. They do not even keep score. They “run up the score” by doing good to others, even when others do not deserve it. They give them better than they are given. It is the law of love, changing things for the better.

Déjà vu leaders have transcended the need for revenge. Their first goal is to make things better for the other person or group. The other’s benefit is their utmost concern. That does not mean they have no interest in their own benefits. It simply means that in their treatment of others, their goal is to do well by them regardless of how they are treated. They don’t play fair; they play right.

Revenge is for immature people. Mature leaders know that ultimately the offending person is going to get what he deserves without anyone else bringing it about. The universe has a way of making that happen as does the natural law of sowing and reaping. But even this ultimate payback is not something déjà vu leaders wish on another person, and that is the hallmark of their character.

They truly want the best for others, even those who do not do well by them.

8. Quit Self-Exaggerating

Déjà vu leaders do not strive to be or to appear more that they really are.

Just as humility sells soap, it can also build success in all areas of your life and leadership. Be a déjà vu leader and learn the way of humility. When you do, you will not only succeed more, but you will also keep your success. Here are a few examples of the humble ways of déjà vu leaders:
• Say you are sorry to your children, spouse, coworkers, customers, and other people in
your life when you fail them.
• Get rid of any and all defensiveness when it occurs in you. What you are defending – the
need to be more than you are – is not worth keeping.
• Serve the people “under” you in whatever structures have placed you “over” them. In
organizations where there are hierarchies, déjà vu leaders are as concerned with their
relationship to the custodian as they are with their relationship to the CEO.
• Root out any attitude of entitlement. Embrace a spirit of gratitude for everything you have
or any good treatment you get.
• When someone is hurt by you, listen. Try to understand what he or she is feeling and
learn how you can make things better.
• Embrace your imperfections and the imperfections of others. Do not ever be surprised
by them.
• Use failure as a teacher and a friend.

9. Ignore the Popularity Polls

Déjà vu leaders do not make decisions

based on the fear of other people’s reactions.

Successful leaders are sensitive to the reactions of others, but when weighing whether or not a
given course is right, whether or not someone else is going to like it is not a factor that carries
any weight. Concern, yes; but weight, no. déjà vu leaders decide to do what is right first and
deal with the fallout second.

Déjà vu leaders go against the odds if the odds are against what is right. They are willing to be
the odd one, risking loss of approval in order to do the right thing. They understand that the
approval of others does not go very far in making one truly fulfilled. It may be nice for a moment,
but getting up everyday and doing what you believe in is much more lasting.

The key is not to count your critics, but instead to weigh them. Forget the popularity polls. Don’t
try to avoid upsetting people; just make sure you are upsetting the right ones. If kind, loving,
responsible and honest people are upset with you, then you had better look at the choices you
are making. But if controlling, hot and cold, irresponsible, or manipulative people are upset with
you, then take courage – it might be a sign that you are doing the right thing and becoming a
déjà vu leader!

The Nine Things are for Everyone

The principles are available to everyone. Do not see leadership success as a goal that you
cannot attain or a prize only for special or lucky people. Success is never embodied in a person,
but in the ways of wisdom that transcend any one individual. What déjà vu leaders do is find
those ways and practice them.

Be encouraged to embark on a path of putting them into practice into your own life and
becoming a déjà vu leader.