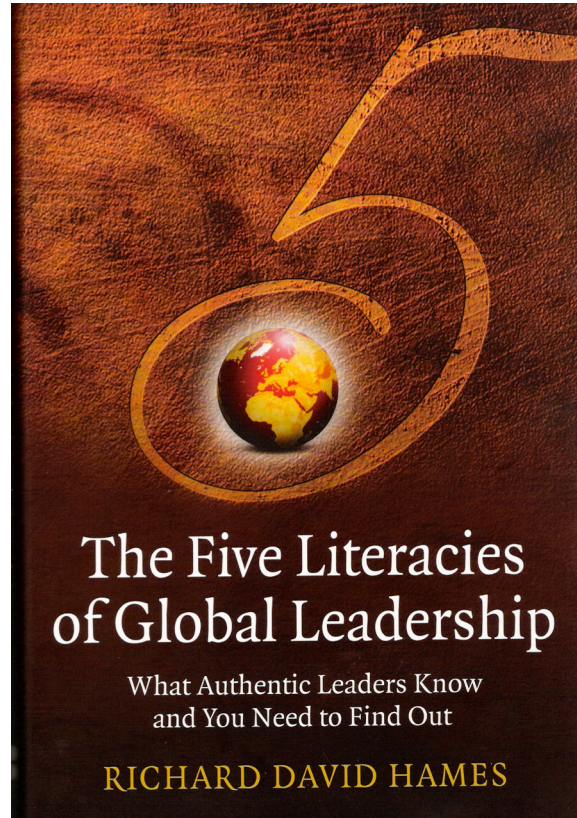

BOOK REVIEW

**"The Five Literacies of Global Leadership:
What Authentic Leaders Know and You Need to Find Out"
by Richard David Hames**

**Jossey-Bass, 2007
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The back cover of *The Five Literacies of Global Leadership: What Authentic Leaders Know and You Need to Find Out* says, "In a world where the cults of money and marketability have all but extinguished hope and possibility, there is an urgent need to escape the gravitational pull of the past. The means to do so are captured here in the Five Literacies – Networked Intelligence, Futuring, Deep Design, Strategic Navigation and Brand Resonance. By applying the Five Literacies, you too can reach 'escape velocity' in the liberation of new horizons for yourself and others."

In 2007 when this book was published, Richard Neville said in his foreword, "Sadly, several Western nations with a knack for inspiring its citizens in time of crisis, have, for

the past decade, been seriously misled. So much so, that in a just world, such 'leaders' would be sitting in the dock at the Hague...Today's politicians are quick to extol their own gift for leadership, despite an often tragic record of needing to be dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st Century."

This is the situation that inspired Richard David Hames to research extraordinary leaders around the world and see what makes them tick. In addition to the five literacies, he discusses five qualities of *five literacies leaders*:

- 1) Passionate optimism and a desire to create a better future
- 2) Curiosity and a craving for learning and wisdom
- 3) Collaboration and a belief in the collective wisdom of humanity
- 4) Expansive thinking that embraces sustainable, system-wide change
- 5) Compassion and a dedication to improving our world

And he discusses three factors important for the future of world leadership that five literacies leaders are embracing:

- 1) Ecological viability
- 2) Generative learning (challenging and adapting knowledge)
- 3) Conviviality and authentic behavior

The book sets out to capture the "ideals, principles, thoughts, models, and practices – the code that motivates [extraordinary leaders] and explains their success." "The contemporary paradigm is exposed for what it is – a deeply flawed, self-reinforcing hotchpotch of linear frameworks and toxic practices. In its place a more resilient, moral, adaptive, intelligence-driven means of organizing and managing human affairs is advocated."

In **Part One**, "Messy Business," world changes and their implications are discussed. Sections include these interesting titles:

- Looking Outside-In
- Looking Inside-Out
- Entangled Freedom
- World on Edge
- Imagine There's No Country
- The Tyranny of Intimacy
- Net Influence
- From Atoms to Ecosystems

- Bazaars, Brains, Brands and Brakes
- Symbiotic Design
- Who's in Charge Anyway?
- Liberating Enterprise
- Network Mastery
- Participative Architectures

In **Part Two**, “Changing Minds,” the “enablers” of the five literacies are discussed: receptiveness, self-renewal, responsiveness, and reciprocity.

In **Part Three**, “The Five Literacies,” the ways in which our language is “unsuited to the kinds of understanding we now need in order to reach beyond the industrial economism it spawned and helped sustain over a period of some 300 years” are discussed, as well as the matrix that is currently preventing us from viable alternatives to the mess of greed and arrogance we are in. The five literacies are introduced as a path to optimism for the future. Sections include:

- Catching the Future
- Zero Geography
- Infolust
- Designing Viability
- Thinking Matters
- Views from the Future
- Planning in Real Time
- Imitating Nature
- Strategic Activism
- (Re)defining Management
- (RAISE)ing Consciousness
- Navigating Emergence
- Upgrading Thinking...
- ChangeBrains and Strategic Decision Theatres
- Bits and Pieces We Pay For
- Using Knowledge Designer
- The Art of Strategic Conversation
- Seeing Through Another's Eyes
- Growing Coherence
- Integrating Multiple Perspectives
- Operationalising Deep Design
- Markets are Conversations
- Brand New World
- Wild about Work

In **Part Four**, “Escape Velocity,” “new rules, models, and strategic questions” used by extraordinary leaders, and the possibility of replicating these leaders’ attributes, is discussed.

This is a scholarly book that many consider ground-breaking. Andrew Greatrex of Global Leaders Network calls it “the single most important book on leadership to be published in the past 50 years. Indispensable.” Ziauddin Sardar, *Futures* editor, says, “If our leaders could rise above self-interest and greed to implant the five literacies, humanity would have a more assured and viable future.” And Goodnews Cadogan of Human Capital Institute calls it “Erudite, exceptionally well researched and captivating in its sheer breadth and approach...It should be required reading for all who aspire to lead in today’s uncertain world.”

From The Hames Group, which was established in 1992: “Hames is a strategic futurist, corporate philosopher and ‘whole system’ knowledge designer. Working at the interface between organizations and society, and frequently transcending both history and ideology, he is widely considered to be among the world’s most innovative intellectuals...Richard is Honorary President of The Hames Group (a globally-distributed think-tank and design laboratory comprising thought leaders from all fields of human endeavor) and the Director of Thoughtpost EDGE...He specialises in the reinvention and renewal of the more toxic conventions underpinning 250 years of industrial capitalism. An authority on the ‘deep design’ of strategically viable solutions for business and government in the knowledge society, Richard has built an enviable reputation as a leadership strategist with a range of clients spanning the globe and in all sectors of the economy. He is a personal mentor to Presidents, Heads of State, and some of the world’s most innovative CEOs.”

For an extremely comprehensive look at how leadership has failed society as we know it today, and how a change in paradigm can ignite a new era in authentic leadership and inspire you to join in the movement, I highly recommend *The Five Literacies of Global Leadership*.

[Dr Darryl Cross is a clinical and organisational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be seen at www.DrDarryl.com]