Real Leaders Don’t Boss
Ritch K. Eich, PhD
softcover, $10.98 at Amazon.com.

Real Leaders Don’t Boss by Ritch Eich is a must read for anyone in a leadership position in the workplace or in life. The book is only 224 pages but filled with examples of what to do and what not to do as a leader.

The book contains eight chapters in an easy to read style with a dose of humor. Each chapter begins with a quote from a famous leader that sets the tone of that chapter. The first chapter addresses the meaning of real leadership. Eich reports that typical leaders command and take center stage. With this style, a leader can take all the glory or be responsible for the fall. He suggests, however, that the best leadership style is a facilitator who listens to all views, anticipates crises, tries different solutions, mentors future leaders at all levels, and takes pride in their successes. A recurring theme comes from a quote from Theodore Roosevelt, who said, “The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done and self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it.” Roosevelt’s quote begins a chapter titled “Real Leaders Know When to Shut Up and Get Out of the Way.” This chapter is the lengthiest and is the heart of the book. The author discusses several top leaders from the military, sports, corporations, and government who triumphed over adversity and exemplified real leadership.

Most of us with experience in leadership training in education and faculty development know that excellent training in these areas does not make great leaders. Eich makes the point repeatedly that great leadership is the result of a combination of integrity and experience. Integrity is a by-product of real character; anyone can exemplify good character when things are going well, but integrity is the capacity to admit mistakes without blaming others.

Each chapter has extensive references. The final chapter has helpful websites and blogs. The last section lists six take-away points reinforcing that real leaders cannot do it alone and must not allow their egos to get in the way. He reiterates that it takes a team to help achieve goals and throughout the book, he credits those who inspired him.

Ritch Eich has a PhD in Organizational Behavior and Communication and runs a leadership, marketing strategy, and communications firm. He is the author of numerous publications and has worked with a wide variety of organizations, including major academic medical centers, universities, the AAMC, the US military, and volunteer organizations.

Those in academic medicine leadership positions, whether deans, chairs, division directors, program directors, clerkship directors, behavioral science directors, chief residents, or department administrators, will find much wisdom between the pages of this book. At $15.99, this gem is inexpensive but its lessons are priceless.

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Common Medical Problems in the Tropics, Third Edition
C.R. Schull
Oxford, UK: Macmillan Education, 2010, www.macmillan-caribbean.com, also available through Teaching-aids at Low Cost (info@talcuk.org) and Amazon (www.amazon.com), $55.03.

Nearly a decade ago, I had the privilege of reviewing the second edition of this book for the no longer published STFM International Committee Newsletter. Filling the niche between a pocket outline book and a monumental treatise, Common Medical Problems in the Tropics seemed just the thing for medical personnel volunteering for short-term work