

## Doug McKinley

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Great leaders are simply awesome human beings. That's the belief held by Dr. Doug McKinley, psychologist and leadership development expert. "I don't aspire to help people become better leaders," says McKinley. "My desire is to help people become better human beings. When you are able to transition into being the best version of yourself, then you're better equipped to be a productive and effective leader."



McKinley earned a Doctoral Degree in Psychology, a Masters Degree in Mental Health Counseling, and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. He worked in a variety of clinical capacities until 1991 when he opened his own practice. But it was in 1999 that he zeroed in on his career passion when he began working in the emerging field of executive coaching. "I worked with a small family business and realized that my expertise and passion for helping people was a transferable skill set toward assisting businesses and leaders in becoming more effective."

Over the course of the next decade, McKinley worked with Fortune 500 executives, small business leaders, nonprofit leaders and churches.

"The differences between the limitations for personal growth and professional growth are not that fundamentally different," McKinley explains. "Human beings typically drift toward stagnation, not growth. You can choose to accelerate personal development and growth or you can wait for it to happen. If you choose the waiting route, you'd better be prepared to be patient. People's tendency to stagnate is driven primarily by fear; fear of rebuke by an authoritative figure like a boss or mentor, and fear of comparison because they lack an authentic sense of their own value."

McKinley points out that while some of the psychological drivers that limit a person's potential or growth come from common themes, a person's measure is entirely unique. "There isn't a bar for people to reach because everyone is different. The goal is to learn enough about yourself so that you can be the best version of who you are meant to be. I help people identify who that person is, and then they become a co-author in the process of uncovering and mapping their own wiring and who they're meant to be. It's at that point that they're capable of being the best leader – and person – they can be."

When contemplating the current American business landscape, McKinley makes an interesting observation about the generational influence on the small-to mid-sized businesses and the entrepreneurial generation.

“Millennial’s and some of the younger generations have a general disdain for institutional thinking. They won’t tolerate an environment that lacks corporate intimacy, where people are rank-and-file. They seek meaningful work and community where personal contributions are valued over making six figures. In fact, as a generation they have no fear of making significantly less amounts of money – that’s not their motivator. And honestly, that’s why I believe they’re experiencing some wild success, because they have no fear and therefore no limits.”

The challenge for leaders, as McKinley says, is being able to effectively identify and balance the needs of the organization with the needs of the organization’s workers. “The challenges that leaders face are increasingly diverse. As a leader, you need to be able to strike a balance between the needs of the organization and the needs of your employees. Those aren’t always the same, particularly when you have a range of generations and perceptions among your employees. What we do at Xcellero Leadership is help leaders map their employee landscape, define the employee motivators to accelerate development and then coach them along the implementation process.”

That desire to help people grow both personally and professionally is what makes McKinley’s work at Xcellero unique. For more than 15 years

now, leveraging my tenure as a psychologist, I have worked with business leaders to find their best version of themselves. Whether that means a CEO, an emerging leader, or working through the dynamics of succession in a family business. Each person has specific psychological markers and drivers that define how they’re motivated and how they can accelerate their personal growth into becoming the best version of themselves. It’s at the point of accelerated growth that companies and leaders both prosper.”

For some people, McKinley says that means understanding that perfection isn’t the goal. “I believe people have to push themselves to learn and grow or they will fall back into old patterns of action and thought. I am constantly reading books from my field and listening to thought leaders – my intellectual mentors. My personal motto, and something I insist my clients embrace, is to have the courage to be imperfect. It’s really only at the point of shedding the fear of making mistakes that we can actually grow into the best versions of ourselves, in work and in life.”

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