

Good to Great has some interesting information in it. The main concept I got from the book was that you had to get the right people, in the right seats, in order to become a great company. Everything else depends on having the right people in the right seats. This includes the leader. The leader has to be the right person, before he can assign others to the 'right seat.'

That being said, I found the idea of a level 5 leader very interesting. In many ways the level 5 leader is a contradiction. The level 5 leader is the one who gets the ball rolling, but gives all the credit to those under him. The level 5 leader is in charge, but sees himself as just one more employee. The level 5 leader does great things, and yet hides from the limelight. Perhaps the largest contradiction, is that in many ways the level 5 leader tries to work himself out of a job. One of the hallmarks of a level 5 leader is that the company does not fall apart after he leaves.

Although the level 5 leader is a contradiction, I can understand why he is so effective. By focusing on the company and its employees, instead of himself, he earns the loyalty and respect of those working for him. I compare the level 5 leader to a bulldozer. He might not move real quickly, but slowly and steadily he gets the job done, letting nothing stand in his way.

Throughout the book I got the impression that all of the employees considered their CEOs to be almost the benevolent king. He was well liked and respected, it didn't feel like anyone would be afraid of him. Of course, he took the company from 'good to great,' why shouldn't everyone like him. I wonder how that impression would compare to the impression people had of the level 5 leader when he first arrived. Clearly he would have had to make some

hard decisions that not everyone agrees with, like the paper company example. I wonder how long it took for him to go from the 'bringer of change' with a bad connotation to the 'bringer of change' with a good connotation. Going back to the central theme of the book, if the leader has the right people in the right seats most, if not all, of his problems disappear.

The last point I would like to comment on about the book is the first thing the book commented on. Good is the enemy of great. I had never thought of it in those terms before, but it is amazingly true. Most people are happy with being good, they are content to be middle of the road. It is very hard to get people out of a comfortable rut, where they are doing pretty good, and leaving the rut means the future is uncertain. I would argue that most people are mostly content with being good at most things, but everybody has at least one thing they would like to be great at. Although it would still be hard to get out of the comfortable 'good' rut, their desire to be great makes them take the leap.

I think the concepts in this book can help schools go from good to great. However, the schools face a particular challenge, high turnover. In many school districts, particularly those in high needs areas, the turnover rate for teachers and administrators is very high. That presents the leader with a huge obstacle, finding the right people to STAY in the right seats. The principal might be a great leader, even a level 5 leader, but if he can't get past the first step of going from good to great (getting the right people in the right seats), the school gets stuck at good on its way to great.