



For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership

David D. Chrislip, Ed O'Malley

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For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership has been honored with a 2014 Next Generation Indie Book Award (in the current events/social change category) and has been named a finalist for the Foreword Reviews book of the year award in social science.

For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership is about the ideas that drive the work of the Kansas Leadership Center. The authors, David D. Chrislip and Ed O'Malley, share their belief that 'civic leadership' needs to become more purposeful, provocative and engaging in order to cope with today's civic challenges and to help transform the civic culture of our communities and regions. Chrislip and O'Malley use the real-life leadership dilemmas of five Kansans to bring these ideas to life.

The book's title, *For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership*, suggests its orientation. Rather than viewing the exercise of leadership in the civic arena as a way of furthering individual desires or acting only when your backyard is threatened, the authors see it as a means of sharing responsibility for acting together in pursuit of the common good. In the end, limiting one's conception of the meaning of civic responsibility to a reactive or passive role most often allows for a lot of noisy complaining while leaving the responsibility for taking initiative and action to others or to local authorities. A great deal more than complaining is needed from many more of us if progress is to be made on the issues we care about.

In these pages, you will find Chrislip and O'Malley's assessment of the current state of civic leadership along with a framework for the more powerful kind of leadership we believe necessary to respond to these conditions. Their purpose is both to redefine civic leadership and to understand how its practice can help transform the civic culture of our communities and regions. To this end, the book is organized in three parts.

In Part I: The State of Civic Leadership, the authors tell the story of the Kansas Leadership Center, how it originated and developed as a laboratory for learning about civic leadership.

Part II: The Practice of Civic Leadership introduces four competencies of civic leadership that respond to today's civic challenges.

In the last section, Part III: The Heart of Civic Leadership, Chrislip and O'Malley suggest what it will take from you to learn how to become more effective at exercising civic leadership, and in the final chapter they return our focus to the book's title -- *For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership* -- to explore how to realize the full potential of civic leadership.

The book is written for anyone who cares enough about his community or her region to want to make a difference. The subtle, powerful, risky and challenging-to-put-into-practice ideas and concepts can help you become more conscious and intentional about the way you exercise civic leadership, and thus help you make more progress on the concerns you care about.

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