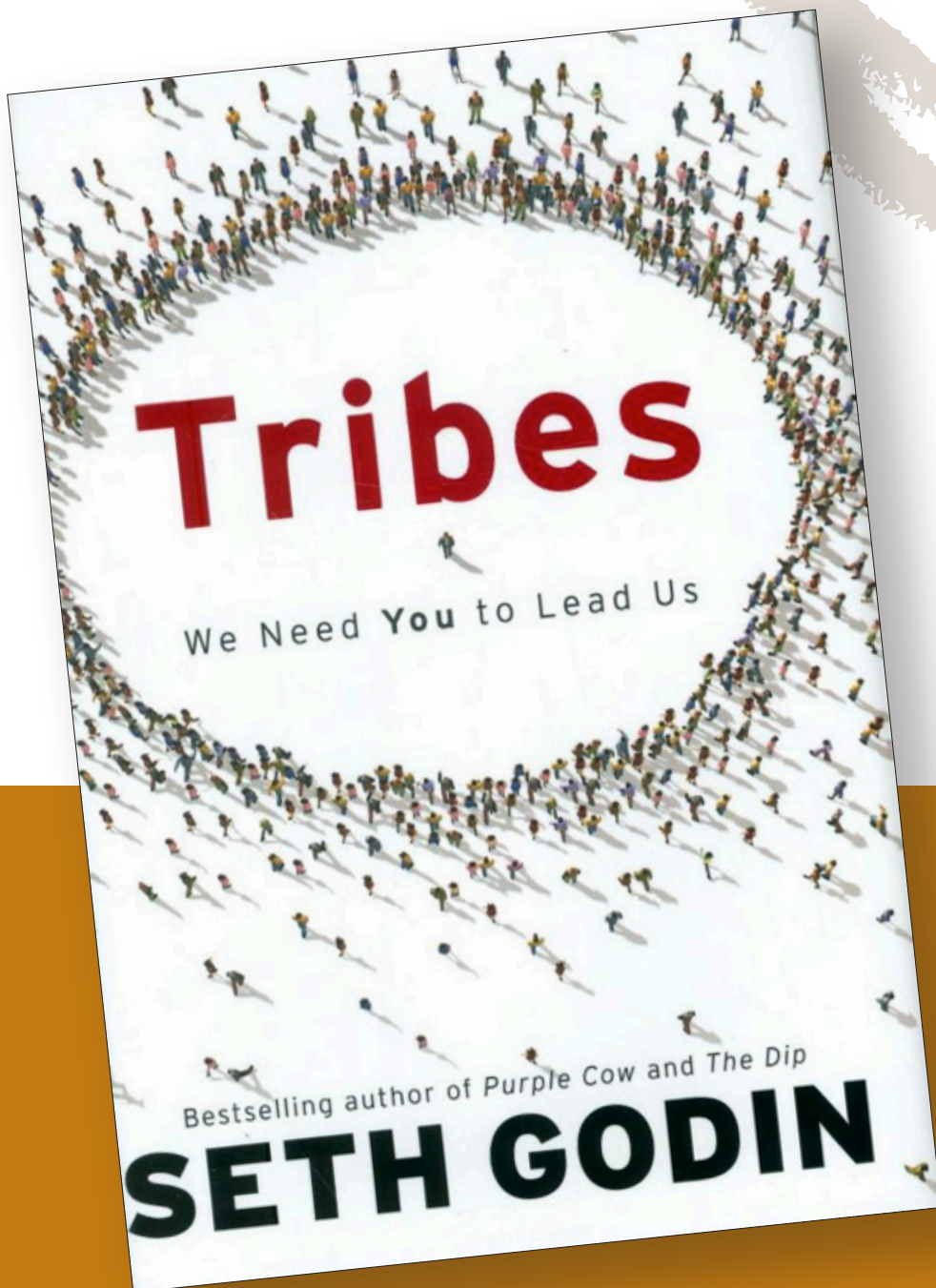


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[Free Book Summaries.
Created for Church Leaders.]

Tribes | *Seth Godin*

Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us
Penguin Group: New York, 2008. 151 pages.

Widely acclaimed marketing guru Seth Godin has written a manifesto for those people who are born to do more than influence. *Tribes* is a book for anyone who just has to lead.

According to Godin, tribes form around leaders, and the tribes that he's most interested in are those that are on the move—those groups of people who are playing a part, forming a movement, going somewhere with purpose and desire to create change.

GODIN BEGINS THE BOOK WITH HIS DEFINITION OF A TRIBE:

A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea.

Based on that definition, there are tribes flourishing everywhere, creating a vast shortage of leaders. At its heart, *Tribes* is a leadership book with the following thesis:

- For the first time ever, everyone in an organization – not just the boss – is expected to lead.
- The very structure of today's organizations means that it is easier than ever to change things and that individuals have more leverage than ever before.
- The marketplace is rewarding organizations and individuals who change things and create remarkable products and services.
- It's engaging, thrilling, and fun.
- Most of all, there is a tribe of fellow employees or customers or investors or believers or hobbyists or readers just waiting for you to connect them to one another and lead them where they want to go.

Leadership isn't difficult, but you've been trained for years to avoid it.

Tribes | Seth Godin (cont'd)

Repeated throughout the book is a common theme: you already have all the skills you need to make a huge difference. You don't have to wait until you have the right job, create the right organization, or move up the ladder. Start right now where you are.

As you read through *Tribes*, six ingredients of a redemptive tribe begin to emerge:

1 Passion

2 Leadership

3 Movement

4 Communication

5 Focus

6 Greatness

1

Passion

Being passionate doesn't make you a leader. Being a leader makes you passionate.

Do you believe in what you do? Every day? It turns out that belief happens to be a brilliant strategy. Can you imagine Steve Jobs showing up for the paycheck? It's nice to get paid, its essential to believe.

It would be very easy to give in to your fear and tell yourself that you don't have the passion to be a leader. If there were a checklist for being a leader, many people would give up when they get to the passion part. Mistakenly, many people think they have to be born with passion. The flaw in that line of thought is that you aren't born with passion. It's a choice, not a gift.

The organizations of the future are filled with smart, fast, flexible people on mission. The thing is, that requires leadership.

2

Leadership

In many organizations, leadership is scarce because few people are willing to go through the discomfort required to lead. Discomfort creates the leverage that makes leadership worthwhile.

Some tribes are stuck. They embrace the status quo and drown out any tribe member who dares to question authority and the accepted order. Big charities, tiny clubs, struggling corporations—they're tribes and they're stuck. They create little of value and they're sort of boring. Every one of those tribes, though, is a movement waiting to happen, a group of people just waiting to be energized and transformed.

Great leadership happens when the tribe least expects it. Do what you believe in. Paint a picture of the future. Go there. People will follow.

Tribes | Seth Godin (cont'd)

A movement is thrilling. It's the work of many people, all connected, all seeking something better. The newly leveraged tools of the Net make it easier than ever to create a movement, to make things happen, to get things done.

It's time to lead though the following actions:

- **Embrace change-making.** Management is about manipulating resources to get a known job done. Leadership, on the other hand, is about creating change that you believe in.
- **Repent of organizational loves.** When you fall in love with the system, you lose the ability to grow.
- **Initiate something.** Initiative=Happiness
- **Commit before it's successful.** If your organization requires success before commitment, it will never have either. A big part of leadership is the ability to stick with the dream for a long time. Long enough that the critics realize that you're going to get there one way or another... so they follow.

3

Movement

Traditional groups often create vacuums – small pockets where balance sets in, where nothing is happening. When you arrive with a group to a party and it hasn't begun, everyone stands around waiting for something to happen. What about a market filled with shoppers before the stores open up? There are no tribes in these situations, only isolated individuals clustered in groups with no motion.

Leaders figure out how to step into those vacuums and create motion.

A leader will work hard to step into vacuums like the situations above and create motion. They will work tirelessly to create movement – the sort of movement that transforms a group into a tribe.

*Leadership is a choice. It's the choice to not do nothing.
Lean in, back off, but don't do nothing.*

Tribes | *Seth Godin (cont'd)*

Godin believes that there are five actions in creating a movement.

- 1** Publish a manifesto – give it away and make it easy to spread. It unites your tribe and gives them a structure.
- 2** Make it easy for your followers to connect with you – as simple as watching your video or emailing you; as deep as connecting with you on a social network.
- 3** Make it easy for your followers to connect with one another – great leaders figure out how to make interactions among the tribe happen.
- 4** Realize that money is not the point of a movement – money only exists to enable it.
- 5** Track your progress – do it publically and create pathways for your followers to contribute to the progress.



Communication

Great leaders create movements by empowering the tribe to communicate. They establish the foundations for people to make connections, as opposed to commanding the people to follow them.

Tribes communicate. They probably don't do it the way you would. They don't do it as efficiently as you might like, but they communicate.

*A crowd is a tribe without a leader.
A crowd is a tribe without communication.*

THE COMMUNICATION CAN BE ONE OF FOUR KINDS:



The essential lesson is that every day it gets easier to tighten the relationship you have with the people who choose to follow you.



Focus

Great leaders don't try to please everyone. Great leaders don't water down their message in order to make the tribe bigger.

Tribes | Seth Godin (cont'd)

Great leaders realize that a motivated, connected tribe in the midst of a movement is far more powerful than a larger group will ever be.

Almost all growth that's available to you exists when you aren't like "most people" and when you work hard to appeal to folks who aren't "most people."

One person with a persistent vision can make change happen.



Greatness

People today are longing for experiences that leave them changed. How do people in and around your organization "taste and see" the fruit of transformation? How do you show them what they want to believe is possible?

The market wants you to be remarkable. Whatever the status quo is, changing it gives you the opportunity to be remarkable.

Is there anything you can't make more remarkable?

The trade-off is not more time and money, but the perceived risk it takes. Pushing your team a little harder in one direction means you're going away from the center, abandoning "everyone" to appeal to "someone." That's the secret to greatness.

Almost all growth that's available to you exists when you aren't like "most people" and when you work hard to appeal to folks who aren't "most people."

NOW WHAT?

Unlike most business/leadership books, Tribes has no checklists, how-to lists, or detailed instructions that show you exactly what to do to find a tribe and lead it.

That was Seth Godin's point.

Every tribe is different. Every leader is different. The very nature of leadership is that you're not doing what's been done before. If you were, you'd be following, not leading.

You can choose to lead, or not. You can choose to contribute to the tribe, or not.

Make a choice.

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Tribes | *Seth Godin (cont'd)*

Recommended Resources

1. **Watch** a video of Seth Godin as he discusses the idea of Tribes and creating movements.
2. **Read** a blog series by Auxano Founder and Team Leader Will Mancini as applies the core teachings in Tribes to the church.
3. **Download** a PPT presentation of Tribes by Seth, similar to the one he gave at Catalyst in 2008 when the book was released.
4. **Read** a post by Phil Prior, head of marketing at Wycliffe Bible Translators, as he describes Tribes as a book acknowledges that we are trying to do more than just find people to keep the pews warm or the collection plates full. We want everyone to know about us, but more than that, we want everyone to know God.

Amazon Links

Hardcover link

Kindle link



Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Tony Bowick

Vision Clarity Connection

Tribes paints the picture of a vast sea of resourced followers waiting to be connected to ideas and each other by a leader. If you want people to follow where you are called to go, be clear. You are designed to be the leader your tribe is waiting for.

How to Go Ahead—Go Ahead and Connect...

Connect your tribe to the shared idea.

- In your top-level leadership meeting, ask your people to think through and write down what one ministry activity or story of transformation most connects people to the heart of your church. On a whiteboard, write down each answer and look for one or two shared ideas behind the team's responses.
- Over the next 6 months begin sharing those stories in gatherings and groups, purposefully bringing that shared idea to the surface in a way that helps people connect to it and to one another even more strongly.
- De-clutter the rhythms of ministry life and increase opportunities for movement by relentlessly focusing communication and attention through the filter of your shared idea.

Connect to your tribe personally.

- If your weekly attendance is several hundred people or less, ask each of your key leaders to give you two names that are not in leadership positions to help you discern untapped, existing tribal leaders in your congregation. Look for people that naturally draw others. Engage them to learn more about how to connect with your tribe. Enlist these natural tribal leaders in your leadership development program. This will deepen your leadership bench and provide stronger connection to your people.
- If your church has more than a few hundred people attending, consider using a RealTime Survey or other powerful tool to gain insight about who your tribe is both inside the church and in your local community. It is difficult to connect meaningfully without accurate information about your tribe's needs, stage of life, avenues of growth, and heartfelt concerns.
- Meet your people where they are. Find out if they prefer communication by letter, phone, or digital means. Do they naturally gather at Cracker Barrel or online with Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram? Begin to mark out at least 90 minutes of each week to meet them where they naturally gather.



More About Tony Bowick

As a Lead Navigator, Tony will help you leverage every resource to move your church forward with clarity and vitality. Before joining the Auxano team, he served as Executive Pastor for three growing churches, effectively leading within their varied cultures and specific theological backgrounds. Tony provides insight and solutions for issues that churches and church leaders are facing, no matter their size or growth challenge.

Before entering full-time ministry, Tony excelled in designing and managing informational systems for the government and corporations along the east coast. These skills allow Tony to understand complex situations and craft solutions that bring momentum by aligning people and technology. In the midst of all of these skills, Tony's driving passion to see churches advance God's mission in the world is contagious and invigorating.

He lives and worships in Houston, TX with his beautiful wife Abbie and two boys, Eldin and Ellis.

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Auxano is the only vision clarity consulting group that will guide your team through a God-ward and collaborative process called the Vision Pathway. To learn more, visit auxano.com

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