

Leading the Millennial Way

By Simon Barrington with Rachel Luetchford

SPCK, London, 2019, 174 pp. Paperback, £9.99. ISBN 978-0-281-08077-9.

This is a book that starts well, but ultimately promises less than it delivers, and is beset by some serious problems concerning methodology.

Its fundamental idea, to explore the attitudes of the millennial generation, with a particular focus on how they receive leadership and exercise leadership, is excellent. It is based on face-to-face interviews with 50 millennials and a further 442 online. Millennials are defined as people who reached young adulthood in the first two decades of the 21st century, men and women born between 1984 and 2000.

The book is the result of a fruitful collaboration between Simon Barrington, a non-millennial leader (actually a Baby Boomer) who was CEO of the relief organisation Samaritan's Purse and is now a consultant with Forge Leadership, and Rachel Luetchford, who is very much a millennial and works to provide restorative aftercare for survivors of human trafficking.

Part One, 'The environment millennials are leading in', provides a sketch of the contemporary work context and how the attitudes of millennials are shaping this. For instance, many organisations are becoming more flexible about conditions of work, not only because of the advance of communications technology, but also because the younger generation are demanding a healthier work-life balance, and refuse to accept that commitment means a readiness to

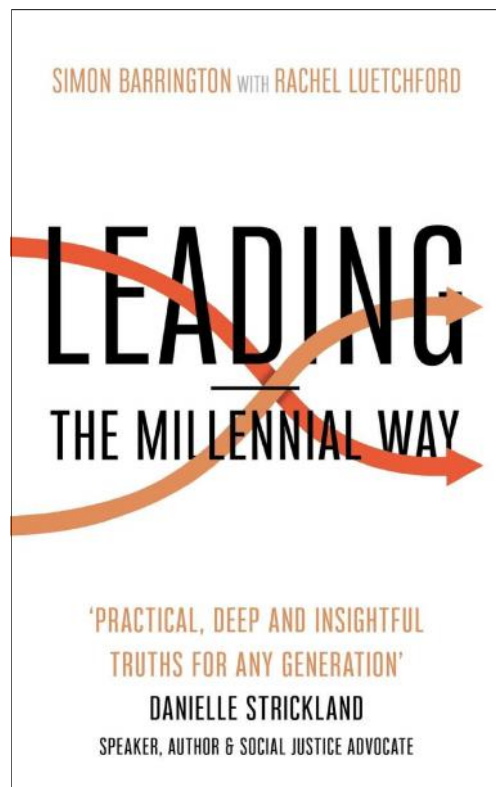
stay in the office later than 5.30. The authors contend that millennials have been unfairly stereotyped as slackers, self-centred, disloyal, concerned with instant gratification and lacking in respect for authority. They are better understood as direct, seeking instant feedback and wishing

is not 'What do you do?' but 'Who are you?' This underlying belief causes us to generate towards businesses that are ethically conscious and good corporate citizens, finding those businesses attractive to work in" (p.33).

Part Two, 'Marks of the millennial leader', introduces us to the five 'I's' of leadership. The research reveals that millennial leaders want to:

1. Be secure in their **identity** but are really wrestling with their need for approval
2. Lead with **integrity** but are wrestling with the fear of failure
3. Be fully alive yet are wrestling with how to have the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual **inner strength**
4. Create space for **insight** and creativity, but are wrestling with whole-life balance and blurred boundaries
5. Have a strong desire to **influence** and make a difference with how to do that well.

These are certainly admirable aspirations. The authors are refreshingly honest about the obstacles to achieving them but full of practical advice about how these obstacles can be overcome. This is the strongest part of the book. It includes such gems as 'In the same way that our fear can lead to the very result we fear (fear of not being liked leading to not being liked, fear of failure leading to failure), the cure for the fears that hold us back from



to see each work instalment as fitting on the path of a greater purpose. Rachel says "The massive challenge for millennials is to make the whole of society part of this transformation towards purpose, so that people in my generation don't have to leave to join a charity, because businesses will all be driven towards long-term sustainability" (p.16). She comments: "The key question for us