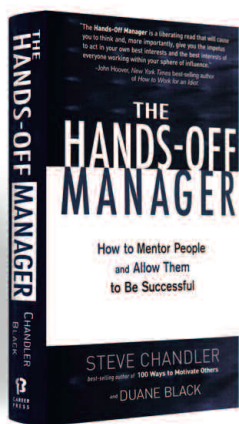


# SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®



by Steve Chandler  
and Duane Black

## How to Mentor People and Allow Them to Be Successful

# THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The No. 1 reason for quitting that employees cite in exit interviews is “my manager.” Most managers and executives not only aren’t aware of this obvious problem, but also probably wouldn’t know what to do about it if they did.

Today’s employees do not respond well to the old hands-on, militaristic management styles. They are highly independent, individual professionals with their own fully developed ideas.

Fortunately, there is a new management style on the horizon: hands-off managing. Managers who practice this style are devoted to rekindling the human spirit within their companies by keeping their hands off their employees’ happiness and allowing success to happen. These leaders recognize that real power comes from partnering, not criticizing.

In *The Hands-Off Manager*, Steve Chandler and Duane Black offer this new management vision, showing how any manager — new or seasoned — can coach and mentor employees rather than hover over their shoulders and goad them into action.

In this system, each employee’s strengths are honored and honed in a climate of partnership and goal-setting. *The Hands-Off Manager* finally provides the solution to the age-old problem of getting the best performance out of people without frustrating them or you.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to improve your management skills by finding a style that fits who you are and what you love to do.
- What it means to be in alignment with life, your team and yourself.
- How to hire people and place them in roles suited to their talents.
- What steps you can take to unlock the powers that live naturally inside others.
- How to improve the attitude of your team and the success of your company.

### CONTENTS

#### Taking Your Power Back

Page 2

#### Redefining Success for Yourself

Pages 2, 3

#### Using the Power of Neutral

Page 3

#### Using Focus and Intention

Pages 3, 4

#### Inspired Ideas Lead to Success

Page 4

#### Practice Finding an Inner Vision

Pages 4, 5

#### Letting Go of Judgment

Page 6

#### Living in Three Worlds

Pages 7, 8

#### The Hands-Off Manager As Coach

Page 8

# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

by Steve Chandler and Duane Black

## Taking Your Power Back

Much management activity today is brought to life by Peter Drucker's comment, "So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work." Managers make it hard for their people. They unknowingly kill the human spirit by their old-school micromanaging and critical judgments.

But there is a new kind of manager emerging in companies today, known as the "hands-off manager."

All managers have two communication styles from which to choose:

- **Hands-on:** They can criticize and judge their people.
- **Hands-off:** They can mentor and coach their people.

This choice presents itself many times throughout every day. Every communication with one of your people is going to be a version of this choice. If you choose judgment and criticism (implied or otherwise), you will provoke defensiveness and withdrawal — not creativity and productivity.

When we judge people and find them coming up short, we then start to criticize and micromanage them. In this age of the sensitive, knowledge-based worker, that's a self-destructive cycle. It engenders nothing but resentment and push-back.

Also, when we judge, we are giving our power away. When we resent a team member, we are giving power to that individual — we are giving power to the person we are angry with by allowing him or her to occupy and dominate our thinking. Real power in leadership comes from partnering, not criticizing.

Hands-off managers set themselves apart by retaining their power. They make the effort to understand everyone they meet, in order to reduce their stress levels at work. These managers are completely aware that every time they judge someone, they alter their own well being.

The hands-off approach allows you to learn to take your power back and live in a world of quiet action and nonjudgment. If you do this, you'll soon be living with an open mind, forgiving effortlessly and taking back control of your energy and enthusiasm for doing great work. ■

## Redefining Success for Yourself

Your first job as a hands-off manager is to manage your inner life. It is impossible to mentor others toward success if you haven't done it within yourself. Hands-off management begins in the mind of the mentor.

So how do we make sure we become successful? Most people never succeed because their definition of success always includes some change in the outer world, and the outer world is so hard to change. So you might begin by redefining success for yourself, and you might find that the definition is already inside you.

Once you wake up to this inner resonance, you will know when things have meaning for you and how you can use them in ways that will benefit your life. This inner tuning and intuition is at the heart of hands-off management. You don't need to get your hands on the world to shape and manipulate what's already perfect inside you.

That's the key to the hands-off life: Find a way to let what's in you naturally come through. Rather than racing around learning all kinds of new managerial systems,

(continued on page 3)

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# Summary: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

## Redefining Success for Yourself

(continued from page 2)

### Great Ideas in the Shower

Many surveys show that managers get their best ideas in the shower, when doing easy yard work or while on vacation. Why is that? It's because you've stopped trying to control your thinking. You've taken your hands off your mind and allowed the wisdom within to emerge.

At a mental level, this is similar to the difference between talking and listening. People have taught for years that if you listen, you will learn more than if you're talking. But people have always assumed that "listening" only means listening to another person, an all-too-narrow interpretation of listening.

Hands-off management starts with listening to yourself; tuning in to your own heart and mind, because if you learn to listen to your inner being, you will learn more than if you're always trying to talk to yourself about how things should be.

procedures and trendy formulae, just get better at knowing yourself and the person you are managing. ■

## Using the Power of Neutral

Organizational life is a constant process of negotiation and sales. It's an ongoing opportunity to promote a particular perspective in order to accomplish a purpose you are working toward. But not everyone sells the same way or from the same position. In fact, what really sets a hands-off manager apart is taking the neutral position. Managerial mastery is simply an unusual ability to achieve the neutral position.

Neutral observation is the ultimate vision. As a true and artful observer, one must be without judgment and without a position. A true observer gains power from seeing all valid positions from a neutral position.

Managers deal every day with opposites. We deal with up and down, success and failure, hard and easy. What we don't understand is that those opposites go together and need each other. We can only experience easy because hard exists. Yet we're always anxious to remove the opposite of the experience we seek — and in reality that's not possible.

So, a micromanager's resistance to opposition, and to the opposite of what he seeks, blocks him from getting to where he's trying to go. He gets good critical feedback, and instead of being open to it, he's immediately defensive. ■

## Using Focus and Intention

Hands-off management means hands off the past and hands off the future. Your focus is the present moment because you understand that productivity always happens *now*. As your people learn to create freely in the present moment, success comes to them. When we are in that creating mode, we are advancing upward, evolving and expanding toward higher levels of success. Creating always occurs in the moment, never in the future.

### Attaching to Your Thoughts Like Velcro

Sit down with an unsuccessful, unhappy or struggling manager and you will hear him describe where his focus goes: "I get too many phone calls. I have too many personal problems to deal with. My health is not ideal right now. I have too many visitors. I'll never be able to answer all my e-mails. My reports are overdue. I have too many meetings to attend."

Notice all those stressful thoughts crowding in on this manager. The hands-off manager learns to take just one of those thoughts and work with it. "I get too many phone calls" turns into "I'm putting my calls direct to message. I look forward to hearing them later when I'm ready and focused on them."

Hands-off managers are creators. They take one stressful situation at a time and create something good from it. Hands-on managers, on the other hand, are reactors. They react to all thoughts, all day, full alarm. For them, life itself is an emergency.

### Management by Worrying

Old-school managers believe that if they don't get worried enough about something, they won't solve the problem. So their internal motivation system is fear. They think they have to *scare themselves* into doing the right thing. However, when you are a manager focused in the moment, you are moving your team forward again. You are paying attention to what's being communicated to you. You are honoring every experience. You are finding value in everything that has ever happened to you. You have respect and caring for others.

Many people think this neutral and accepting focus would make them passive and directionless managers. Quite the opposite! Pure action emerges from an undistracted mind. Because that is where *intention* enters the picture, rises up and takes over.

It's important to have intention. But an intention is different from a goal, and knowing the difference is vital to your success. Goals in companies and with indi-

(continued on page 4)

# Summary: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

## Using Focus and Intention

(continued from page 3)

viduals striving for success are expressed this way: “The goal is where I want to get to, and I’m going to be really unhappy and disappointed if I don’t arrive there.”

Obviously this kind of thinking only introduces stress into the human system. It builds discomfort and unwanted pressure. Stress is not optimal for performance. That’s why it’s more effective to use peaceful inner intention.

One can more easily think, “Well, that’s where I intended to go to, but oh well, I didn’t get there.” It may sound weak, but it’s actually stronger, because from that non-stressed mood you are more likely to keep trying. You are able to say, “It was just an intention. It’s okay that I didn’t get there. I’m going to keep working on it.”

With an intention, there’s no place to get to — no hill to climb. The intention is in you already. You just flow with it and use it as a direction monitor. ■

## Questions Leading to Success

The hands-off manager doesn’t spend a lot of time giving advice. Instead, he or she perfects the ability to ask questions that allow success and fulfillment to happen, questions such as “What things come naturally to you?” or “How easy is the workflow for you right now?”

We have been trained by the media, our families, our traditions and our culture to focus on the negative and try to fix it. We obsess over sins and shortcomings, trials and tribulations. We try to go outside ourselves to change the negative. Then we try in vain to create an external situation that’s positive.

But none of that works, because the positive solution is on the inside. What we were seeking was already in us. How do you find these solutions inside you? Start asking questions, and then listen. Take a moment after you do something and question how it feels to you. Listen to that feeling — with a little practice and discipline, it’s not hard to find a way to test all your actions against this inner knowing. ■

For information on how giving creates success, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

## Inspired Ideas Lead to Success

The best ideas come when you stop forcing your thinking. The straining involved with forced thinking actually pushes away ideas. You are repelling that great idea that wants to float up and announce itself. But how

do we get into that relaxed, hands-off state of mind?

The answer is to learn to listen and recognize, to learn to be available for the ideas that are in us instead of trying to find them in a manual or guideline.

That’s the secret discipline involved with success. It’s in *allowing* yourself to step back and let it happen. It’s a tough discipline to learn at the outset, but it’s a rewarding one. It rewards you in large ways by helping a great career to unfold. But it also rewards you in smaller, more immediate ways: For example, you can actually finish your workday with a low level of stress. You can learn what it means to do less and achieve more.

## Not a Soft or Passive Approach

When a hands-off approach is used, energy and productivity increase. The approach holds people *more* accountable for high performance, not less. It is not patient with people whining and playing victim. It has no room for self-pitying complaint.

Sometimes, a hands-off manager can be “hard” on team players to wake them up to their power. You want to get their attention, so you might say, “Look, this is ridiculous. You’re some of the most talented guys I’ve ever worked with. I’ve watched you perform at a level that was truly exceptional. And now you’re stumbling over this? This is not acceptable. It shouldn’t be acceptable to you, either. Tell me what I can do to assist you right now.”

## Disappointment and Mismatches

The “common sense” world has laid out a false map for us of what it means to be “successful.” Most definitions of success associate it with becoming an admired leader, becoming financially abundant, finding an ideal love mate or living for a long time. But those pursuits are all comparison-based in their definition of success. They focus as much on one-upping or excluding others as they do on inner peace and happiness. ■

## Practice Finding an Inner Vision

Learning to make decisions based on inner listening — paying attention to gut instinct — is different from trying to judge what the “right” or “wrong” thing to do would be. That’s the old school of management — to take right and wrong, make them absolutes and try to impose them in the workplace.

Instead, find what you are aligned with and what feels natural to you with every decision you think you have to “make.” Actually, for the hands-off manager, decisions

(continued on page 5)



# Summary: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

## Practice Finding an Inner Vision

*(continued from page 4)*

have a way of making themselves, of becoming such obvious choices that no real decision is necessary. You just know what to do next.

As you bring people onto your team, you'll become skillful at choosing the people with whom you feel a sense of alignment. You'll know them and feel a sense of well being when you're around them.

### *A Different Kind of Vision*

Some top leaders say a great leader is a visionary. And we know they are referring to market trends, product and service development and all the things business magazines tell them to think about.

The hands-off manager is a different kind of visionary. The hands-off manager's vision is not a vision for what the company will be in 10 years. It's a vision that sees into the potential of people right here and now. Your success as a hands-off manager will be directly related to your ever-increasing ability to see more in your people than they're seeing in themselves.

This vision goes other places too. For example, you acquire a new vision of the customer. You realize that if you don't observe your customers and why they're buying, as well as why they're not buying, you will lose your ability to help them. Vision, again, becomes observation. It's not a fantasy trip to an island in the future. Your customers are waiting to tell you how to relate to them.

### *The Rewards of Hands-Off Decision Making*

The hands-off approach carries this key insight: Allowing success is the opposite of forcing success. It is learning what it means to be in alignment with life and with yourself. Many people think this is theoretical, spiritual or something that hasn't ever been used. The opposite is true. This is an applied system that works in the real-world workplace.

You'll consistently find the strengths in your people instead of trying to add what's missing. You'll be able to teach them to use what's inside them instead of trying to fix them and doing the things most managers try in vain to do.

Most businesses operate through wild attempts at control. They focus on their own rules, policies, detailed supervision, inspections and quality control as if their people were trained animals. The hands-off manager is the solution to that dysfunction. When you find people who love to do what you're asking them to do, you don't have to control or motivate them. You don't have

to force them to work harder. They're already doing it.

### *What Is the Manager's Job?*

Your job as a hands-off manager will be a job of learning. You'll be learning to be aware of what your people love to do. You'll be learning what powers live naturally inside them. You'll then be more skilled at placing people in roles suited to their talents. You will see into them, see what they love to do and listen to what they tell you.

It can get interesting and challenging when you embark on this journey, because people don't always tell the truth. They tell you what they think you want to hear or what they think will get them a higher salary. That's the curse of approval-seeking in action. You'll detoxify that situation every time you show them that winning your approval is not a productive pursuit. Approval-seeking is our society's most futile and dysfunctional pursuit. If your people can learn to drop it from their workplace endeavors, they may even learn to drop it at home and improve their personal relationships. ■

## Tuning Your Instrument

Your highest purpose is to become the fulfillment of your potential — to learn to manifest and bring into the world the gifts that are contained within you. It is simply the most fundamental, the most profound and the most important reason for living. It's to become who you already are.

Purpose is letting the best of what's in you come through and then giving it to the world. That's your life's purpose. And everyone has the same purpose. Within that purpose, they have their individual outer manifestation: to entertain, to organize, to teach, to create. ■

### **The Hands-Off Football Coach**

When the University of Texas football team won the national championship in the 2006 Rose Bowl, it was largely due to their star quarterback, Vince Young. Young had become a well-rounded, complete player in his junior year, and many were calling him the best quarterback of all time.

When his coach, Mack Brown, was asked how all those improvements in Vince Young's game occurred from one year to the next, Coach Brown said, "We just stopped coaching him. We just got out of his way. We saw what was emerging in him, and we decided to let it come forward without a lot of old coaches messing with it."

### Becoming Available

If we are the old-school micromanagers, then we've been in hiding. We've been unavailable. We've been hiding behind a disguise made up of problems, and excuses for having those problems. However, it's time to turn and go another way, to calmly choose another path to take. This path will make you available to yourself and to others. Old-school micromanagers try hard to learn how to succeed. They seek out teachers and success gurus. They want to think and grow rich. But it's that very thinking that's in the way.

Galileo knew that the answer was not in outside knowledge. "You cannot teach a person anything," he said. "You can only help him discover it within himself." Galileo's words are the heart and soul of hands-off management.

Let's say you've cleared your mind and learned to disarm all the negative thoughts in your life as they arise. Now you're free to discover who you are. You're free to realize the best that's in you.

What's really happened? You've become available to yourself. And in this freedom from all those burdens you've been carrying, you're able to follow your instincts. Because you listen to your instincts and you're not worried about what other people might have said about you. You're available for inner ideas. You're available for insights. You're available for inspiration.

You've erased that wall you have built up in yourself though a lifetime of criticism, self-judgment, anger and disappointment — all the thoughts that have blocked your potential from coming through. ■

### Letting Go of Judgment

The common theme of most managers is that they are always mildly upset about what's happening. But what's happening is not upsetting them — their judgment about it is.

Anything that bothers us only bothers us because we have a judgment about it. We cling to passing thoughts that say, "This is wrong! This shouldn't be happening to me!" But we don't stop to realize that the upset we're experiencing is caused by our judgment.

If we could be open to all things and see them as the flow of the marketplace and get away from what should not be, we would release ourselves from a monumental amount of dissatisfaction, stress and blame. This ability to dismiss judgment when it pops up is a critical skill for the hands-off manager to cultivate.

If you try this dropping of negative judgment for long

enough, it will produce peace at your center and a gentle surge of relaxed intelligence to allow you to deal well with any issue. We aren't saying you should be in denial. You can be an expert evaluator of performance without being emotionally "disappointed" or "upset" with a person's actions. Knowing the difference is vital.

### Living in the Moment

As a hands-off manager, you can be different. You can start your day centered in the peaceful, present-moment awareness of infinite possibility. That's because you no longer imagine all the things that are going to go wrong. There is no "wrong" way things can go. They're just going to go where they're going to go. There's no more judgment about what's going to occur.

We are not saying to take a passive attitude. This is the opposite of passive. It's an active embrace of what is. It frees up energy that had previously been trapped in internal conflict and distress. You are ready to act sooner.

Life is not so much about what's going on, but how we choose to interpret it. Soon you alter all your thinking to be about you and your interpretations instead of the "bad" and "wrong" and "unfair" things that have happened. Practical benefits arise from this managerial approach. Your people will be more comfortable with you when you accept them the way they are. They will be more trusting of you, and their interest will turn to doing great work for you.

Once employees find out that you aren't judging them, they'll share almost anything with you. That's when you can make real progress in helping them improve their skills. The hands-off manager has the rare ability to enter into a true partnership devoted to the success of the employee. Employees who aren't being judged are far more open to coaching and mentoring, and allowing their managers to help them improve. ■

For information on creating results: the benefits of hands-off management, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Waking Up the Whole System

Feeling your connection to everything enhances hands-off success. It comes from feeling all the support you are already getting. You don't need to put your hands on anything to wring out that support. It's already everywhere. Most people live completely unaware of how supported they are. They think they are relying on themselves. In their offices, they have signs that say, "If it's to be, it's up to me."

(continued on page 7)

## Summary: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

### Waking up the Whole System

(continued from page 6)

They also think they can make money only if they take it from someone else. In their contracted view of life, it's a zero-sum game. But the universe's evolution outward toward infinite expansion is not a zero-sum game. Any time you try to create a system around the finite zero-sum premise, the system collapses, because it isn't in agreement with nature. ■

### Deepening Your Desires

The hands-off manager always wants to go deeper, to find what lies beneath a co-worker's desire. You don't just want to know what he or she wants, you want to know why. That allows you to put your mentoring and coaching into that context. You are helping people get what they want, not what you want.

And when you take their "wish list" deeper than the first blush, you can show them how to live the life they dreamed of right now, with your full support. Otherwise your people are seeking the end without the means.

You will help them go right to the means. So instead of having goals about how many millions they're going to have, they now have intentions about how effective a person they're going to be. They now have intentions about what's inside them that would create the wealth. Under your mentoring, they can reformat their approach to what they want. ■

### The Ultimate Zero-Sum System

Marxism — a zero-sum system — was created on the paranoid concept of the finite limitation of wealth; in other words, there's only so much wealth in the world. It was the ultimate hands-on system of micromanagement taken to the extreme.

Marxism said there are limited, finite resources and we must take these limited resources from the rich and redistribute them. What destroyed Marxism was the recognition in the free market system that wealth is infinite and unlimited.

Similarly, this limitation and finite thinking can also destroy an organization from within. For example, a lot of people think that if they deliver extraordinary customer service they'll have to give up profit. They don't have the imagination to see how huge a contribution great service is to their long-term bottom line.

To make certain you never fall into this zero-sum black hole, focus on what you're giving. Trust the system and know that it will work. By doing this, you will get results.

### Living in Three Worlds

Allowing success requires that we create an understanding within ourselves of the existence of three worlds that we live in every moment of every day, simultaneously.

These worlds are spirit, mind and body (or the physical world). Most of what happens in those three worlds you can't actually see.

We spend most of our time focused on the physical world. But the physical world is just the manifestation of outcome. By the time you see it, it's too late to change anything. The real change happens internally, not externally. Change becomes *visible* only in the external world.

So our ability to make a difference and change the results we're seeing does not happen by focusing on and fixing external events. Our access to destiny occurs earlier in the process than that. It occurs when we focus on spirit (our intuition and inspiration) and mind (our thinking and planning). Those are the only domains where we can exercise free will and free choice.

You don't get to choose whether the sun's going to come up tomorrow or how other people are going to behave or react to a given circumstance. But you do get to choose *who you are being*.

### Focus on Process, Not Results

The Iceberg Principle would say that what you see above the surface in the ocean when you look at an iceberg is only about 10 percent of what actually exists. The other 90 percent of the ice floats below the surface and is not visible to the eye. That's exactly what's occurring in our own world. What we see coming through in physical form is a very tiny portion of all that's actually happening.

The hands-off manager will focus on the process, not the results. The process is the mind and the spirit inside the machine. It's the heart of your organization. If you focus on the process, the results will unfold naturally. So if you have an inner process that guarantees a quality sales force, good customer service, a reliable product and a good marketing plan, you don't have to worry about how to be successful. It flows easily from there.

If you want to make a change, it starts in the worlds of the mind and the spirit. Your spiritual world becomes the world from which you receive ideas, inspirations and insights. And the mental world is where you create plans; it's the world where you use thought, analysis, focus and attention to bring into being that which you desire to contribute to the world. The physical world is

(continued on page 8)



# Summary: THE HANDS-OFF MANAGER

## Living in Three Worlds

(continued from page 7)

just the world of events, of information. It's where results occur, where data is collected, where objects are manifest, where the outcomes happen and where actions take place. It's the last stage of the process. ■

## The Hands-Off Manager as Coach

Hands-off managers become excellent coaches. They create an atmosphere where their people receive coaching gratefully. So the hands-off manager becomes quietly masterful at the coaching process. It's a perfect replacement for the old-school micromanager's habit of criticism, judgment and correction.

Hands-off managers coach their people so that their people's talents are allowed to emerge, allowing them to do better work in the workplace and become more harmonious with their own inner intentions.

You can help your team by first creating a clear concept of coaching itself. You'll want a definition that's easy for your people to understand and is personal to them, so that when you coach somebody, both parties know what they are doing.

The term "coaching" came from the world of sports — a world of performance and numbers. Sports provide a beautiful metaphor for what good coaching is in an organization. In sports, coaching is what happens when a coach or a manager works with an athlete to increase that athlete's ability to contribute to the team.

### Unsolicited Advice

A lot of people think that coaching means giving advice, but in a nice way so that you're giving advice but you can call it "coaching." That's still advising. Coaching is a more complete package, because coaching embraces a bigger picture. When you are coaching, the first thing you do is seek to understand the other person. You do not first seek to be understood.

Therefore, the first stage of the coaching session is the intake: You ask questions and you get in touch with the intentions and the inner motivations of the person. It's important for you to see what they want to achieve, what they're trying to do and how they see the situation. So first of all, you want to listen, ask more questions and let them talk. Keep your hands off their answers. They don't need fixing.

An important skill of effective coaching is knowing to ask some good, open-ended questions that reassure the

person you're coaching that you're really interested in how they feel and how they see things. That's what you're going to work with. You're not going to work with some preconceived notion of how things should be. That's just a subtle form of advising and is condescending.

### Coaching Is About What's Possible

Coaching is moving people from being stuck in a mind-set in which they think they are limited to opening a new possibility. The hands-off manager has what the Zen masters call "beginner's mind": Nothing is impossible. If you are that manager, you are always looking to move people from rigid limitation to possibility.

Lasting behavioral change is always the ironic specialty of the hands-off manager. By not micromanaging, more things change. By keeping your hands off the process, the process improves faster. Would you pull a flower up with your hands from the ground to help it grow? Why try to do similar things to an employee?

### A Quest for Understanding

What does coaching lead to? Better behavior? More productivity? Something you, as a manager, want? No. What good coaching leads to is that the person you're coaching will achieve his or her objectives faster. Not yours. That's really vital in coaching: focusing on the wants and needs of the person being coached, not your own.

When you're coaching someone, you are coaching them so that they realize their objectives faster; you're not coaching them so they become better for what you want, or so they serve the company better after the coaching session. They will, but that's a side effect.

When you are doing your hands-off coaching, you're helping people align with their own intentions and noticing how their intentions are in alignment with yours. You *can* coach. Just be yourself and be committed to the higher good. As a hands-off manager, you enjoy creative freedom, because you are not burdened with doing things right and making others wrong. That's why the hands-off manager is such a success. ■



If you liked *The Hands-Off Manager*, you'll also like:

1. ***First, Break All the Rules*** by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. The authors distill important advice from some of the world's greatest managers, based on 80,000 interviews conducted over 25 years.
2. ***The Leader's Shadow*** by William Q. Judge. This examination of the inner dynamics of executives in top leadership positions is a good resource for coaches and trainers.
3. ***Get Your Ship Together*** by D. Michael Abrashoff. Former U.S. Navy Commander Abrashoff provides stories about creative leaders from all branches of the U.S. military and the business world and how they managed to motivate, inspire and get great results under pressure.