

Tribes by Seth Godin

“The secret of leadership is simple: Do what you believe in. Paint a picture of the future. Go there. People will follow.”

Some books don't give you new information, but they sure do give you a reminder! They remind you of something you've always known but perhaps buried under job titles, strategy decks, and busy calendars. Something that you've stopped living. *Tribes* is that kind of book.

When I first picked it up, I expected another leadership read. Something about motivating people or perhaps full of frameworks and neat diagrams. But *Tribes* isn't a manual. It's a manifesto. A wake-up call to stop waiting for permission and start leading the movement that only you can.

“You can't manage your way to leadership.”

Godin's challenge is direct - leadership doesn't come from authority. It comes from courage. From standing up when it would be easier to stay seated. From choosing to speak when silence feels safer.

His message is clear - : stop waiting for permission. Stop waiting for the job title, the corner office, or the all-staff email that tells you it's your turn to lead.

He doesn't talk about leadership in the abstract ... he talks about discomfort. The kind that every changemaker knows.

“Leadership is scarce because few people are willing to go through the discomfort required to lead.”

It's so true - real leadership isn't neat, convenient, or comfortable. It's raw. It's vulnerable. It's standing up when your voice shakes, pitching an idea that might flop, challenging what's always been done, and resisting the easy path of “good enough.” For all of us who have been there – sometimes it's just bloody hard!

If you're not at least a little uncomfortable, you're probably not growing. You're not stretching your edge. And *Tribes* reminds us that this is exactly what makes leadership both rare and valuable.

Godin doesn't glorify discomfort.... he normalises it. He reframes it as proof that you're leading in the right direction. Real leadership - the kind that changes teams, cultures, or even communities - isn't about certainty. It's about *courage in motion*.

It made me think of the countless leaders I've met who feel that deep itch to do something different but wait. Wait until they have more time. Wait until someone approves it. Wait until it's safer. *Tribes* gently but firmly says (just like a great coach) - stop waiting. The discomfort is the path.

"A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea. For millions of years, human beings have been part of one tribe or another. A group needs only two things to be a tribe: a shared interest and a way to communicate."

That's it. No bureaucracy. No complex hierarchy. Just people, a shared idea, and a way to connect. Who would've thought it could be that simple? It's a reminder that we don't need to overcomplicate things ... sometimes the magic lies in stripping it all back to the essence of what truly matters.

Godin's definition is deceptively simple and yet, in that simplicity lies the reason so many organisations struggle. We've built structures that connect people to systems, not to each other. We've forgotten that belonging is at the heart of what is required.

He fills the book with examples - Skype, Tesla, Wikipedia. Each started small. Each began with connection before scale.

Reading it, I found myself thinking about the "tribes" I've belonged to - the teams, the collectives, the communities. The magic was never in the org chart, it was in the feeling of shared purpose, of belonging. That moment you realise you're building something bigger than your role description.

Tribes isn't a step-by-step guide. You won't find templates or ten-point plans. What you'll find is challenge, provocation, and clarity.

It asks questions that sit with you long after you close the cover:

- Who am I leading - and why?
- What idea connects us?
- Where am I playing it safe?
- What story am I brave enough to tell?

If you're looking for neatness, this book might frustrate you. But if you're seeking purpose, or provocation, this is for you.

"Sheepwalking: the outcome of hiring people who have been raised to be obedient, and giving them brain-dead jobs, and enough fear to keep them in line."

I love Godin's word *sheepwalking*. It resonates because I see it so often – you probably have too! The meeting full of people nodding along but not speaking up. The leaders so busy “managing” that they forget to think. The cultures that reward compliance over curiosity.

He argues that too many organisations have built entire systems designed to produce sheepwalkers - people who do what they're told, tick boxes, and stay safely inside the lines. And in doing so, we've accidentally trained the courage right out of people.

It's confronting, because it's true. How often do we see bright, capable humans dimming their light because the system tells them not to make waves?

Tribes challenges that directly. Godin's antidote to sheepwalking isn't rebellion for rebellion's sake, it's purpose. It's leaders creating environments where people are trusted to think, question, and take initiative.

Because leadership isn't about raising followers who obey. It's about raising thinkers who care. And if your culture celebrates safety over courage, don't be surprised when the tribe stops moving.

For me, *Tribes* is like a mirror. It reflects back your intentions, your fears, your excuses. It doesn't lecture - it nudges.

And as I turned the last page, I realised that the question isn't “Am I a leader?” The question is, “What movement am I willing to start?”

Because leadership is no longer about job titles. It's about motion.

Life's too short to be mediocre.

If you've ever felt the tension between what is and what could be - if you've ever looked around your workplace or community and thought, “there must be a better way” ... this is your book.

If you're tired of managing processes instead of leading people, if you've ever felt the pull to do something that matters but found yourself hesitating - *Tribes* will give you the nudge (or shove) you need.

It's short enough to finish in an afternoon but rich enough to change the way you think about leading.

You'll start spotting tribes everywhere (and seeing where they're not) and maybe, just maybe, realise you've been building one all along.

“What leaders do: they give people stories they can tell themselves. Stories about the future and about change.”

Tribes is one of those rare books that doesn't just *inform* you, it *speaks* to you. It's about courage, belonging, and the power of starting before you feel ready.

It's not perfect - it's light on the "how," but heavy on the "why." Yet maybe that's the point. Godin's not here to give you answers. He's here to make you think.

"The easiest thing is to react. The second easiest thing is to respond. But the hardest thing is to initiate."

So go initiate. Gather your people. Tell your story. Create your movement. The world doesn't need more managers. It needs more leaders.