



**FIREHOUSE  
FREEDOM**

Book review presents:

**THE RIDE  
OF A  
LIFETIME**

BY ROBERT IGER

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# Key Takeaways:

*Relatability*

*Optimism*

*Empowerment*

*Authenticity*

*Ask Questions*

*Underreact*

*Don't Play It Safe*

*Help Others*

*Clear Priorities*

*Empathy*

# relatability

It's a book of our lifetime...

# Disney



# optimism

Good leaders are optimistic...

*“Optimism.*

*One of the most important qualities of a good leader is optimism, a pragmatic enthusiasm for what can be achieved. Even in the face of difficult choices and less than ideal outcomes, an optimistic leader does not yield to pessimism.*

*Simply put, people are not motivated or energized by pessimists.”*

Nobody wants to listen to a Negative Nelson. If you want to lead in any capacity, large or small, you need to be prepared to be optimistic in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Optimism is what **fuels persistence, fosters creativity, and inspires people to find solutions.**

# empowerment

*Strategic planning - **he reduced it.***

**Iger defines empowerment through the removal of fear and the clarity of purpose.**

He argues that true innovation only happens when leaders grant people the "**freedom to fail**" and provide second chances for honest mistakes. By eliminating a culture of fear, he empowers his team to take the massive creative risks necessary for a company like Disney to evolve.

To make this autonomy effective, Iger stresses that *a leader must articulate clear priorities so employees aren't paralyzed by guesswork.* He advocates for "decency and empathy," believing that treating people with genuine respect gives them the confidence to lead. For Iger, empowering others isn't about hand-holding; it's about setting a clear North Star and then trusting talented people to find their own way there.

# authenticity

Be **authentic.**

*“True authority and true leadership come from knowing who you are and not pretending to be anything else.”*

You need to find your unique leadership style. Trying to be someone else makes you a phony. While it can take time to find your leadership voice, it's worth the effort.

**It's what will allow you to lead in a unique, compelling way.**

# ask questions

How to learn: **ask questions.** Surround yourself with good people who are experts.

*“Ask the questions you need to ask, admit without apology what you don’t understand, and do the work to learn what you need to learn as quickly as you can.”*

Good leaders don’t know everything. They ask questions, dig deep when they don’t understand, and work hard to get up the learning curve. **There is no other option.**

# under-react

How to respond to bad news: **under-react**.  
Get information, be decisive when needed,  
and be as transparent as possible.

*“And I tend to approach bad news as a problem that can be worked through and solved, something I have control over rather than something happening to me.”*

Professional challenges are problems to be solved, rather than bad fortune that's outside of your control. Once you understand that **the obstacle is the way**, you will be prepared to face challenges with optimism and resilience.

# DON'T PLAY IT SAFE

*“Don’t be in the business of playing it safe. Be in the business of creating possibilities for greatness.”*

Leadership, innovation, and thriving in competitive marketplaces requires you to take risks. You obviously want to take smart risks, but don’t play it safe.

**At best, playing it safe keeps you where you are.**

With time, competitors will come in and dismantle your organization. Leaders understand this, and they take smart bets in an uncertain and fast-changing world.

# HELP OTHERS

*“At its essence, **good leadership** isn’t about being indispensable; **it’s about helping others be prepared to possibly step into your shoes**—giving them access to your own decision making, identifying the skills they need to develop and helping them improve, and, as I’ve had to do, sometimes being honest with them about why they’re not ready for the next step up.”*

Organizations don’t succeed because of one person. It’s a team effort. As a leader, it’s your responsibility to empower the people that work for you to improve and do their jobs well.

Instead of castigating them when things go wrong, help them solve the roadblocks that are preventing their success. If you do this, **everyone will be happier and more successful.**

# clear priorities

Have **clear priorities.**

*“If leaders don’t articulate their priorities clearly, then the people around them don’t know what their own priorities should be. Time and energy and capital get wasted.”*

Without clear priorities, people will gravitate toward easy, low-value tasks. They will feel uncertain about what they should be doing.

As a leader, you need to articulate your priorities clearly and make sure there aren’t too many priorities.

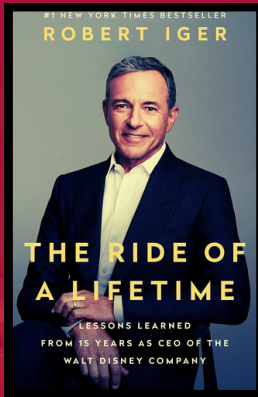
At any given time, the organization should be moving in a **small number of value-adding directions.**

# empathy

Empathy is critical

*“Empathy is a prerequisite to the sound management of creativity, and respect is critical.”*

Good leaders learn how to harness empathy to their advantage. They understand that organizations are made up of people with unique needs, and they help those people meet those needs.



# Get your copy of *The Ride of a* *Lifetime here.*

If you made it this far, thank you. Truly. Firehouse Freedom and the Every Day Leader curriculum exist because of the hours I spent learning from others long before anyone ever listened to me. Chiefs, senior firefighters, quiet mentors, historians, warriors, and leaders whose lessons were first passed to me through books, stories, and lived experience. This work is built on the best of those lessons, filtered through the realities of Fire and EMS life, and meant to be carried forward, not shelved. However you choose to read next, tablet, audiobook, dog-eared paperback, keep reading. Keep learning. Keep sharpening how you lead yourself and others. Thanks for investing your time here. I hope what you found in these pages pushes you to go deeper, stay curious, and continue the work of becoming an Every Day Leader.

**-FLIP**



“If you haven't read hundreds of books, you are functionally illiterate, and you will be incompetent, because your personal experiences alone aren't broad enough to sustain you.”

— Jim Mattis,