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Opportunity Leadership

Stop Planning and Start Getting Results

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Don't create change. Capture it.

Get ready to forget everything you know about "working your plan." In this counterintuitive book, innovative university president Roger Parrott turns leadership on its head and shows you how unexpected opportunities--the ones you may be missing--are the key to your success.

With an *Opportunity Leadership* mindset, you'll see God-directed results like never before. In plain language, Dr. Parrott guides you in developing traits to focus your leadership outlook on untapped opportunities. Not only that, he provides a step-by-step plan for you to create organization-wide tendencies that enable your team to respond to opportunities with expediency, adeptness, and energy.

The book challenges leaders to break free from their long-range planning models and provides a detailed path for creating a ministry culture focused on capturing new opportunities. It presents paradigm-shifting challenges, including:

- Leading without a plan is the plan
- Making decisions that don't just solve the problem
- Practicing future-focused evaluation
- Emulating baseball managers instead of football coaches
- Embracing speed
- Getting comfortable with risk
- Learning to love roadblocks

Dr. Parrott defines Opportunity Leadership as "being grounded in anticipation of God-given opportunities that mesh seamlessly with our mission, gifting, and capacity—propelling us to destinations that are heavenly ordained."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DR. ROGER PARROTT is one of America's most experienced university presidents, leading Belhaven University, a doctoral level institution, highly regarded as one of only 36 schools in the world working at the highest level of collegiate Arts programs. Belhaven was named in 2021 to "Best University to Work For" by the Chronicle of Higher Education, and Roger was recognized as one of "The 10 Most Visionary Education Leaders of 2021" by Education Magazine. For a quarter-century he served as in board leadership roles with Lausanne Movement and The Mission America Coalition and was chairman of the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization. He is the author of *The Longview: Lasting Strategies for Rising Leaders*.

ENDORSEMENTS

During my time at Krispy Kreme, I would have loved having Dr. Parrott's Opportunity Leadership as a guidebook for our 2008–2016 corporate turnaround. We did not have the luxury of developing five-year plans . . . in the words of Dr. Parrott, we attempted to lead by "capturing opportunities rather than building plans." To echo Dr. Parrott's theme in this must-read book, I learned the following: If we bury our heads in planning, we are likely to miss the greatest of God's opportunities! At last, someone has written a leadership book for both today and tomorrow!

—JIM MORGAN, Former President, Krispy Kreme

With the speed of change, the days of crafting long-term strategic plans are rapidly evaporating. Leaders today have to remain nimble as navigating the unexpected is the new normal. Opportunity Leadership challenges leaders to abandon traditional planning practices to become leaders who seek God and are responsive to what He is directing and doing. If you need a breakthrough in your thinking, then this book is for you!

—TAMI HEIM, President and CEO, Christian Leadership Alliance

This is an incredibly important book that flies in the face of almost everything you've been taught about the importance of strategic planning. Roger Parrott wants you to forget for a moment all of the tedious and all-consuming planning that leadership gurus want you to do, and cut yourself loose to see and embrace the opportunities right in front of you. As the CEO of multiple organizations over my career, I can tell you that virtually all of my "breakthrough moments" had little to do with strategic planning and everything to do with looking, listening, and being available to the opportunities God had placed right in front of me. Do yourself a favor and read Opportunity Leadership.

—RICHARD STERNS, President Emeritus, World Vision US; author of *Lead Like It Matters to God* and *The Hole in Our Gospel*



1. We've all been taught that "those who fail to plan, plan to fail." But you're suggesting we give up planning altogether. Why such a radical recommendation?
2. You've said that giving up planning was the best decision you've made in your three decades as a university president. How has that decision changed you as a leader?
3. So that we're on the same page, how do you define Opportunity Leadership?
4. You're not advocating simply a new ministry priority, but framing a new model of leadership. Does this come out of your study of leadership, or what's the foundation on which you're building the paradigm?
5. You suggest that planning is ineffective, but beyond that, it hinders the success of a ministry. How so?
6. Why do leaders and organizations stay committed to planning, even when they know it is ineffective?
7. Was there an event that "flipped the switch" for you to think about giving up planning, or did it come about more in concept as you evaluated your planning structure?
8. Was this a "cold turkey" change to turn off planning and start capturing opportunities, or is there a process of transition?
9. As a CEO, it may be easy for you to a future without a plan, but didn't giving up planning scare your board and those who work with you?
10. In what ways do leaders need to be differently prepared if they are going to effectively capture opportunities?
11. A leader can't bring about change on their own, so how do you create a ministry culture that will embrace this idea of capturing opportunities instead of planning?
12. You conclude the book by retelling the story of David and Goliath, and detail in scripture how David was an Opportunity Leader. Am I right to take away that this isn't a new idea, but it is going back to how God's design for leadership?