

# THE DICHOTOMY OF LEADERSHIP

## Balancing the Challenges of Extreme Ownership to Lead and Win

**JOCKO WILLINK and LEIF BABIN**

**JOCKO WILLINK** and **LEIF BABIN** served as U.S. Navy SEAL officers in the Naval Special Warfare Task Unit. This unit was the most highly decorated special operations unit of the Iraq War. After leaving the Navy, Babin and Willink formed Echelon Front, a leadership training company which takes their military experiences and uses that to teach businesspeople how to build, train and lead high performance teams. Willink and Babin are the authors of *Extreme Ownership* which was a *New York Times* bestseller. Jocko Willink is also the author of *Discipline Equals Freedom*, *Way of the Warrior Kid* and *Marc's Mission*. Jocko Willink is a graduate of the University of San Diego. Leif Babin graduated from the United States Naval Academy.

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**MAIN IDEA**

Leadership is always a balancing act.

Great leaders know when to lead out and when to be good followers instead. They also sense when to aggressively maneuver and when it's better to pause and let things sink in. Great leaders take ownership of results without becoming too extreme.

Specifically, to become a great leader you've got to learn how to balance the big three dichotomies which leaders face all the time:



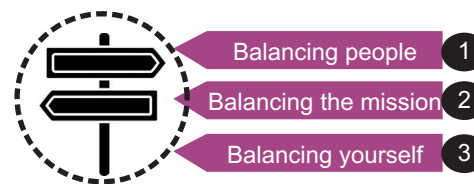
To become a better leader, find and maintain the right balance.

*"Every behavior or characteristic carried out by a leader can be taken too far. Leaders can become too extreme and upset the balance required to effectively lead a team. When balance is lost, leadership suffers and the team's performance rapidly declines."*

– Jocko Willink and Leif Babin

*"Balance in leadership is crucial to victory. It must be monitored at all times and it must be modulated to specific situations as they arise. It is not easy to maintain the constant shift, continual modulation, and frequent adjustment necessary to balance all the dichotomies across every spectrum of leadership characteristics. Yet this skill is essential for effective leadership. Every good leader must develop the ability to recognize, understand, and adjust that balance. While it isn't easy, through knowledge, disciplined practice, and sustained effort, anyone can master finding the equilibrium in the Dichotomy of Leadership. Those who do will dominate their battlefield and lead their teams to victory."*

– Jocko Willink and Leif Babin



**1. Balancing people** . . . . . Pages 2 - 3

The ultimate dichotomy in war is a leader has to get close to and care deeply for his or her people and yet still be willing to put them in harm's way if the mission requires it. Similarly in business you need a close relationship with your people without sacrificing the ability to ask them to do what is truly required to complete a task or a project. To find the right balance with people:

- 1 Own your results but empower others
- 2 Be resolute without becoming overbearing
- 3 Know when to mentor, when to fire

**2. Balancing the mission** . . . . . Pages 4 - 5

Good leaders know exactly what their objective is but at the same time have the situational awareness to recognize emerging threats and opportunities and respond accordingly. You have to balance going for it with changes in the environment all the time. To balance your mission intelligently:

- 1 Train hard, but also train smart
- 2 Aggressive, not reckless  
Disciplined, not rigid
- 3 Hold people accountable but don't hold hands

**3. Balancing yourself** . . . . . Pages 6 - 8

Great leaders are willing and able to lead but they are also willing to lean on the expertise of people who know more. You have to balance when to be a leader and when to be a follower. To balance yourself effectively:

- 1 Plan, but don't overplan
- 2 Be humble but at the same time not passive
- 3 Stay focused, yet detached