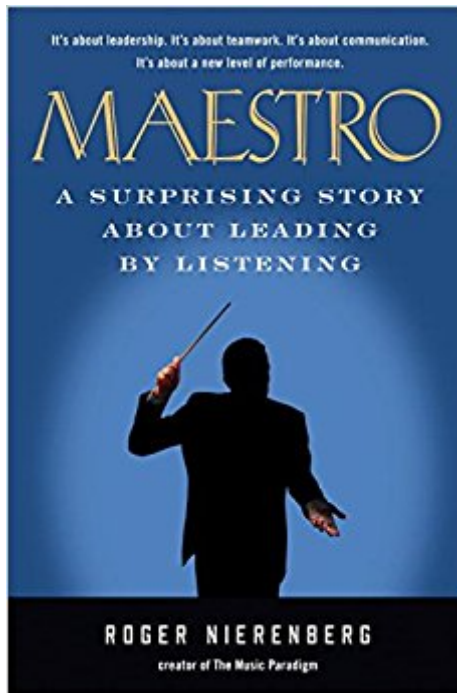


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# Maestro: A Surprising Story About Leading By Listening



## Synopsis

A conductor reveals powerful leadership lessons by explaining the inner workings of a symphony orchestra. Roger Nierenberg, a veteran conductor, is the creator of The Music Paradigm, a unique program that invites people to sit INSIDE a professional symphony orchestra as the musicians and conductor solve problems together. He captures that experience in *Maestro: A Surprising Story about Leading by Listening*, a parable about a rising executive tough challenges. The narrator befriends an orchestra conductor and is inspired to think about leadership and communication in an entirely new way. For instance: A maestro doesn't micromanage, but encourages others to develop their own solutions. There's a big difference between conducting and trying to play all the instruments. A maestro helps people feel ownership of the whole piece, not just their individual parts. A maestro leads by listening. When people sense genuine open-mindedness, they offer more of their talent. If not, they get defensive and hold back their best ideas. Truly great leaders, whether conductors striving for perfect harmony or CEOs reaching for excellence, act with a vision of their organization at its best. For more information, visit: [www.MaestroBook.com](http://www.MaestroBook.com)

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## Customer Reviews

An executive gets hired to head a division of a large company. The division is in trouble and needs to be put right. The missing ingredient is leadership, and the executive learns what he needs to know through a relationship he builds with a symphony conductor. The conductor shares insights about what gives musicians a "competitive edge." This is a quick read but the part about the executive at the division is not very interesting while the part about the conductor is very

insightful. These short storytelling business books about management skills trace their roots to the 1982 bestseller: *The One Minute Manager*, by Kenneth H. Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. They teach certain truisms in a short story and hold promise that a few insights will translate to business management success. The trend now is to deliver a story about a business person learning wisdom from leaders outside the normal business environment. The premise is that the conductor has business management skills. *The Maestro*, the conductor, gave several lessons on how an orchestra works together in harmony. This was very interesting and well done, with examples that included some interesting musical scores. We learn about the uniqueness of the conductor. The conductor has immediate access to all the information from the podium and provides leadership that results in the whole being much greater than the sum of the parts. Importantly, all the musicians are artists, so they cannot be told how to do their jobs. But everybody has to yield to the vision of the conductor. The conductor is a visionary leader who strives to reduce the gap between the reality of the performance and the vision of the ideal performance.

Some business lessons are better taught by story than rigorous facts and analysis. We learned about change and how to prepare and cope with it in *Who Moved My Cheese?* The same was done in John Kotter's *Our Iceberg is Melting*. And now, conductor, Roger Nierenberg explores leadership in a new business fable to add to the list, *Maestro*. In Nierenberg's parable, we follow a business executive struggling to motivate his team to work together so they might stop their business' sinking ship. The executive befriends an orchestra conductor who allows the executive to sit within the orchestra during rehearsals. And it's from that seat that the executive soon learns the value that listening has on leadership. For instance, from the violin section, one may not understand what the double basses are hearing, or how it may impact how they play. In the same way, one business division may be working in a silo -- not considering its impact on the rest of the company. And so by learning how a large and diverse orchestra works so flawlessly, the executive finds leadership principles to apply to his own career. Seeing that it's a parable, it's a bit difficult to select some quick-meaning quotes, but here's a few of my favorites: "...a strong vision can lead people away from focusing on their part alone toward being aware of the whole. The vision should be lofty enough to stir and challenge people. If it's too limited, then people will feel underutilized and uninspired." "Tasks that might have previously seemed routine now acquire meaning and beauty. While they are doing their jobs, they're always thinking of the grand vision.

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