

EXCERPT



***The Leader in You***  
*Discovering Your Unexpected Path to Influence*

July 14, 2020 | \$16, 160 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-3183-8

Have you ever been thrust into a surprising place of leadership? Are you looking for a mentor who has had similar experiences? Every life experience—good, bad, or indifferent—is a distinct marker that God used to hardwire you for purpose and help you lead from an authentic and healthy place. The power of God’s presence is not just for your benefit but also for all in your sphere of influence. Discover your unique leadership gifts and skills, showing how our obedience to God unleashes a ripple effect that can alter the destiny of generations to come.

## Discernment Guides Authentic Leaders

We all have areas of passion that God stirs within us, areas that lead to transformation in our and others’ lives. I liken this stirring to God-ordained trigger points that are catalytic in nature. I am passionate about service, imparting wisdom, seeing injustice and oppression combatted, and developing emerging leaders. As a young person growing up in Spanish Harlem (New York City), when I learned that my female neighbors were victims of domestic violence, I didn’t ignore their cries for help. I called 911 and hoped that my neighbors would press charges against their abusers or seek safety elsewhere. I couldn’t close my ears to the pain and pretend I hadn’t heard. God hadn’t wired me that way. I’d rather act than regret.

In 2015, Rev. Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil, another social justice champion, gave a talk at Movement Day, a gathering for Christian leaders who want to spiritually and socially transform their cities. She said, “Our silence is violence.” If we don’t respond who will?

Some people stop to help those in trouble while others walk way. They run toward danger rather than away from it because they bear a sense of responsibility and hope that they can be used by God to change this situation. We too can respond this way, because we view life through the lens of hope and possibilities. Faith in God is the key to our ability to see miracles of transformation occur.

Through this lens of hope we are not dismayed by what we see. And even in times of discouragement, we can be renewed in the promise of God’s Word.

Reverend Dr. Mac Pier, the founder of Movement.org (formerly the New York City Leadership Center), my place of employment for eight years, has said at many Movement Day gatherings, “What God wants to do in a city, he has already put in the hearts of its leaders.”

In every professional role I’ve had since college, I’ve had the freedom to chart my own path while developing a benchmark for success going forward. Being entrusted with responsibility is exhilarating. I’m an analytical thinker. I thrive when given administrative tasks such as establishing order, cultivating strategic plans, building teams, and executing the ideas of visionary leaders. Having come to understand that God has gifted me in this area, I’m usually able to pinpoint what my involvement might be when new opportunities come my way. Though God could call me to a different arena and equip me to accept different responsibilities, my past experience has served as a great indicator of the types of assignments God might lead me to accept.

In 2016, I was given the assignment to lead a team of seasoned leaders with a local New York City organization. The idea excited me. We would develop programming to confront issues of prejudice and injustice within the community. I didn’t realize we’d have to first confront opposition within the team.

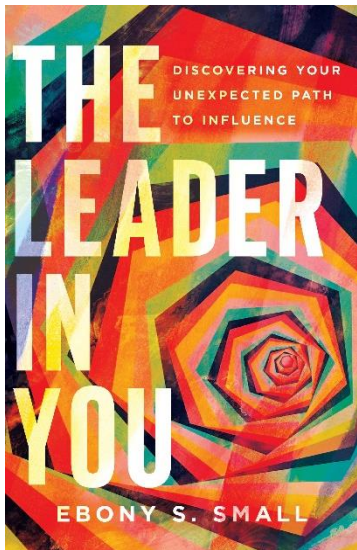


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*"In an age of same-old leadership models and advice, The Leader in You offers a prophetic word from someone who can relate with anyone who feels they don't quite fit the mold. If you are seeking to find your place in God's movement, this book is for you. There is a generation waiting to be unleashed, and I believe The Leader in You could be the catalyst."*

*Nick Hall, chief communicator and founder of PULSE*

Based on conversations and the actions of some of the team members, I could tell that they didn't want me to lead. Instead, they wanted me to be onboard with *their* vision. My directives were questioned, and there was a constant resistance to the establishment of order in our planning processes, which would have brought clarity to the entire team.

I didn't realize what was happening at first, but subconsciously I started justifying my experience and the knowledge that qualified me to have a seat at the table. It would take me a few weeks to realize that I did this because I sensed that my leadership was being challenged. An us-versus-them mentality also emerged as we worked with community partners. We needed to work with these groups and could not afford to alienate them, no matter how ineffective we felt their policies might be. The spirit and culture of the team, often revealed through an elitist viewpoint, ran counter to my leadership style, my character, and my integrity. I felt that I had stepped into a minefield and needed to quickly learn new tools of engagement to navigate it.

I had been leading teams for nine years prior to this new assignment. Yet within a few weeks I doubted my ability to effectively lead this group. I always pray before saying yes to any new assignment. But in this case I thought perhaps I hadn't heard God clearly. Maybe I accepted this assignment to please people rather than God.

But then I remembered to get back to basics. Like Nehemiah, I fasted and prayed to the God of heaven. I needed God to

- reveal what might be hidden from my understanding of how to effectively lead and serve this team.
- free me from a mindset that might hinder our advancement.
- reveal any inadequacies in my leadership and equip me with the tools to reengage this group and bring forth the unity necessary to serve our community.

Through the wise counsel of my mentors I was reminded to pray strategically as I reflected on Scriptures that would help me lead in the face of opposition.

It's hard to be disliked, talked about, or falsely accused. Though I wanted to quit, I knew a bigger picture had yet to be revealed. I needed to rise above my emotions and remind myself that I had the mind of Christ, as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:16.

I remained with the team of seasoned leaders. Within three months we had made incredible inroads in serving the community and were able to repair some strained relationships. Since then, opportunities emerged for me to mentor members of the team. Time will continue to tell the breadth and depth of our success together.

Nehemiah's example (and the examples of other leaders in this chapter) proves that people need leaders who can help them see a way out of their present circumstance, leaders who will walk in the trenches with them and empower them to actualize change.

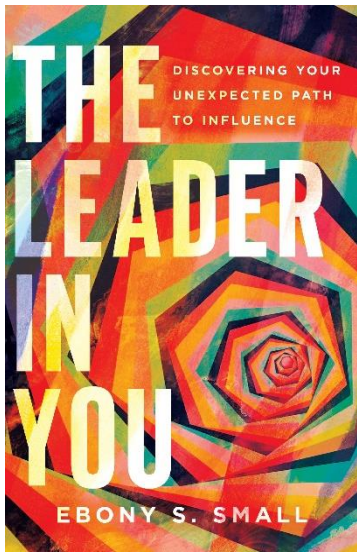


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*"It's not often that a young author inspires readers to consider the role they can play to advance God's kingdom. Ebony's book is for all who seek to maximize their leadership potential. Her experiences and story will empower and guide you to be your best self in response to a higher calling."*

*Wanji Walcott, chief legal officer at Discover Financial Services*

In a polarized political climate, which has led to increased racial tensions, unhelpful rhetoric from our nation's leaders, and deepening discord along racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, we can detect the need for authentic leadership. But those who follow Christ want to lead in ways that are anchored in God's truth and righteousness—to be peacemakers and not peacefakers.

In Matthew 11, John the Baptist was facing imminent execution. He had fulfilled his assignment—preaching the message of repentance and preparing the way for the salvation of the Lord—but in a moment of despair, he yearned for reassurance that the Messiah had indeed come. In Matthew 11:3-5, John asks Jesus,

"Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor."

Today, in moments of despair—the devastation of mass shootings, the mass incarceration of people of color, the sexual harassment of women and men, human trafficking and sexual exploitation—people, like John, are asking leaders, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? Are you the one to promote justice, to restore peace, to bring forth restoration and healing to our communities? Are you a leader who will discern the times and seasons and determine to convey the heart of God in every matter?"

We must get to a redemptive place in our spiritual identity where neither our skin color nor our politics trump our call to righteousness as Christians. We must contend for healing, restoration, and the presence of God to go with us into every assignment and give us rest. We must wrestle with the responsibility of the believer to rise up and be part of the change we desire to see across the spheres of influence God has given us.

—Adapted from chapter two, "Discerning the Times and Seasons"



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BIO



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*"I am proud to call Ebony Small a friend. Few young leaders have the intellectual, spiritual, and social qualities Ebony exhibits, and fewer still have the ability to share what they have learned quite so effectively. In *The Leader in You* Ebony uses her life story to share deep, practical advice on how all of us can become more useful tools in building the kingdom. We are all leaders in one way or another, and I am grateful that God raises up amazing young leaders like Ebony so that we can all become more effective."*

—Kevin Palau, president and CEO of the Luis Palau Association

## **Yielding to the Wisdom of God's Word**

"In a time when leadership scholarship can be easily separated from practice, Ebony's words match her walk. This necessary resource provides an authentic account of leadership from a woman who has blazed many trails and invites readers to rediscover their God-given gifts. If you are questioning your courage to lead or looking for ways to embolden your calling, this book is for you!"

—Nicole Martin, director of United States ministry for the American Bible Society

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**Ebony S. Small** is the vice president of multiplication at PULSE, a ministry committed to awaken culture to the reality of Jesus. Her passion is to be positioned by God to bring forth the transformative power of the gospel in the lives of people through mentoring, leadership training, and ultimately high-level collaborative partnerships that have generational influence.

She was formerly director of Movement Day Expressions with [movement.org](http://movement.org), where she was dedicated to catalyzing leaders to affect cities across the globe. She was selected as a Lausanne Younger Leader in 2016. Ebony also serves as an associate pastor at Bethel Gospel Assembly in New York City. Pastor Ebony has been a guest speaker at Q Conference, Amplify, Collyde, TOGETHER, The Table Coalition, Movement Day, and at many other church and para-church events. She has a distinct heart for ministering to women and next-generation leaders so they can actualize their calling in Christ and be launched as ambassadors of the faith, revealing to others the transformational power of God's Word.

Ebony received her bachelor of arts from the State University of New York at Binghamton and a master professional studies degree with distinction from Nyack College's Alliance Theological Seminary. She resides in the Bronx, NY.



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