

Smooth Leadership

How to Lead So People Want to Follow

Session length: 60–75 minutes

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Leadership advice tends to focus on setting a vision, making the call, and holding people accountable. This alone is more likely to get you compliance than enthusiastic buy-in. Smooth Leadership is a talk that starts from a different premise: the best leaders are, first and foremost, followers. They follow their principals, opportunities, what the situation is actually asking of them, and even those they lead.

Smooth Leadership challenges the assumption that authority earns commitment. If the best you are getting from people is that they follow the rules, you have obedience not loyalty. Leaders who understand this distinction stop managing behavior and this talk shows them how.

Brian draws on interpersonal neuroscience, the practical philosophy of wants and requests, and a model for leading through experiments instead of mandates.

Audiences leave with concrete and immediately actionable tools they can bring into their work alongside a fundamental shift in how they think about the relationship between leading and following. With this more leaders can lead in such a way that others would be thrilled to follow.

YOUR AUDIENCE WILL WALK AWAY WITH

- **A new way of seeing what makes some leaders the ones people love to follow.**
- **The ability to tell the difference between compliance and commitment.** Audiences learn what it takes to earn people who are in it with their whole selves rather than simply being obedient.
- **A simple habit that gives them better information and earns trust at the same time.** Questions can do both at once — and most leaders either underuse or misuse them.
- **An experiment they can run tomorrow.** Audiences learn how to design change with the people it affects so it stops triggering defensiveness and results in buy-in.