



AUTHORS & WRITERS BOOK CLUB

Session Report

How Not to Lead: Reflections on Leadership, Power and the Habits that Undermine Trust

by Jacinta W. Lwanga

Date	Saturday, 29 August 2026 · 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Venue	Kibanga Bookstores
Format	Craft-focused reading session with the author in the room
Author sales this month (spotlight author)	15 copies

About the Book

How Not to Lead is a work of applied leadership non-fiction built backwards. Rather than opening with a model of what good leadership looks like, Jacinta spends nineteen chapters naming what it isn't: **incompetence, insecurity, dishonesty, jealousy, favouritism, hypocrisy, pretense, and more**, before turning, chapter by chapter, toward the correction. Each chapter is carried by a named case-study character (more than twenty of them appear across the book), and each closes by handing the reader an action plan and a set of reflective questions rather than leaving the argument as analysis.

The effect, read cover to cover, is less like a leadership textbook and more like a mirror held up chapter after chapter. The book is explicit that transformation doesn't begin with perfection, it begins with courage, and that the choice to change is always available. It is a short-chaptered, plainly written book that clearly wants to produce behaviour change in its reader, not just admiration for its argument.



THE AUTHORS & WRITERS CLUB
KENTIA

BOOK

OF THE MONTH

AUGUST 2026

 29th August, Saturday 2026

 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

 → Venue: **Kibangabooks**
Bookstore, Corner House 5th
FL, Kimathi St



HOW NOT TO LEAD

Reflections on Leadership, Power and the Habits That Undermine Trust

JACINTA WERE LWANGA

(Non-Fiction, Leadership/Personal Development)



doreen khamala
BOOKS

Join us for book club discussion to read, learn & grow as a writer.

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#SelfPublishedSuccess #ReadwithUs #LearnFromPublishedAuthors

ABOUT THE BOOK

Bad leadership rarely announces itself.

It hides behind titles, authority, and tradition until trust erodes, morale declines, and results suffer.

In *How Not to Lead*, seasoned Human Resources and leadership practitioner Jacinta W. Lwanga offers a candid examination of the leadership behaviors that quietly damage organisations across industries and cultures.

Drawing on over 30 years of executive-level experience across corporate, banking, nonprofit, consultancy, and public institutions, she reveals the subtle patterns leaders repeat — often unknowingly — that undermine credibility, weaken teams, and stall performance.

This book explores:

- Jealousy that suppresses talent instead of developing it
- Gossip that poisons culture from the shadows
- Pretense that replaces authenticity with performance
- Avoidance that allows dysfunction to grow unchecked
- Power used to control rather than to serve

Each chapter exposes a leadership failure and then offers a corrective path rooted in clarity, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

This is not theory.
It is practical reflection grounded in lived organisational realities.

Written for executives, managers, board members, HR professionals, entrepreneurs, and aspiring leaders worldwide. *How Not to Lead* challenges you to examine your own leadership posture and choose impact over image.

Strong leadership is not accidental. It is intentional. Sometimes the most powerful way to grow as a leader begins with understanding what never to do.

How Do You Actually Write a Book Like This?

Asked how she came to write a book with this level of specificity about bad leadership, Jacinta was direct: it came from years of close observation across different organisations and leadership environments. The book is not theoretical; it draws on real patterns seen repeatedly in the workplace, distilled into habits that many leaders fall into without realising it.

The Architecture: One Formula, Repeated

We spent real time on the structural engine of the book, because it is almost perfectly consistent from Chapter One (Incompetence) through Chapter Seventeen (Pretense). Every chapter runs the same five beats:

1. The Problem — the failure pattern is named and defined plainly, with no hedging.
2. The Story — a named case-study character dramatizes it through a specific, narrated workplace scene.
3. The Pattern — the lens widens, showing how the same habit recurs across sectors, organisations, and cultures, not just in one office.
4. The Correction — the fix is reframed, often by replaying the same scenario with a different leader who handles it well.
5. Reflection — the chapter closes with direct questions and a short action plan that turn the lesson back onto the reader.

So the pattern the group traced was: identify the habit, dramatize it through a case study narrating a real event at work, widen it into a recognisable pattern beyond that one story, deliver the

correction, often as a parallel scene rather than straight advice, and finally hand the reader a set of questions and concrete actions so the chapter doesn't end at analysis but at practice.

The group's read was that this repeatability is doing real work: because the shape never changes, a reader learns to trust chapter eighteen before they've even opened it. Predictability, used on purpose, becomes its own form of authority — though a couple of members flagged that by chapter twelve or so, the formula can start to feel mechanical, and wondered whether Lwanga ever considered breaking it for effect.

The Voice of Authority

Jacinta was clear about why she wrote the way she did: this is a book meant for impact. She wanted readers to have genuinely shifted their behaviour by the time they finished it, not just nodded along. That intention shaped four sentence-level habits the group identified together:

- Short, declarative sentences. Claims land as fact, not hedge. Conclusions are often stated before they're explained.
- Named patterns. Recurring labels act as a refrain, so an individual story becomes a general rule the reader starts recognising elsewhere in their own life.
- Direct address. The reflective questions switch to “you,” implicating the reader rather than simply informing them.
- A deliberate range of evidence. Composite workplace cases sit alongside real, sourced examples, so the book signals both a recognisable pattern and outside proof, not just her own word for it.

Deliberately short chapters, kept light on exhaustive detail, were part of the same design decision: a book meant to change behaviour has to be finishable, and finishable books get acted on.



Figure 1: Jacinta Were Lwanga - Author of How NOT to Lead

The Writing Journey

Jacinta wrote *How Not to Lead* over about eight months in 2025, after leaving the corporate world, and published it in March 2026. But the real story of how the book came to be starts earlier than that.

For Jacinta, the need to write came from a need to communicate, to help organisations recognise and confront this problem. Watching the same patterns repeat across different organisations and leadership environments, talented people held back, cultures quietly poisoned, authority mistaken for leadership, she began to see a shape to it all, and eventually, the book took form.

She used an editor covering development editing, cover design, and carrying the book through to print.

She printed 500 copies in March. She has since sold roughly 420 copies. Her channels so far have been almost entirely relational and community-based rather than retail: her WhatsApp network of close friends who'd followed her story and wanted to read the book the moment it was out; leadership forums of professionals, where one director alone bought around 130 copies as gifts for his colleagues; and direct vending at events, which has moved a smaller but steady number of copies.

The pattern she's found is genuinely smart—the one that senior professionals: CEOs and directors, buying in bulk at a discount to gift to their teams. Packaging the book as a leadership gift for a team, not just an individual purchase, has been the single thing that has worked best for her.



What Isn't Working

Two honest gaps came up:

1. **Social media.** Jacinta admitted it isn't working for her, though she's trying to stay consistent on it. The group's advice was practical: if it's becoming overwhelming, hire a social media manager rather than let the platform go dark or let it drain her.
2. **The exhaustion of selling a book alone.** The group agreed that book selling is genuinely tiring, but that the printed stock means the motion has to keep going regardless. The wider point the group landed on was that most authors quit their writing life not because the book failed, but because self-publishing demands something to keep the momentum, and blood, pumping between projects; without that, the energy simply runs out.

Jacinta isn't yet sure when she'll write a second book. This one was triggered by a specific bad-leadership experience, and she openly wondered aloud whether she should wait for another such trigger, or whether that's the wrong way to think about a second book at all. For now, her plan is to

turn *How Not to Lead* into a practical workbook or training material, extending the one book into a second product rather than starting from zero.

Who Is This Book Actually Written For? – Identifying Your Target Audience.

The group raised something worth sitting with: a professional-audience self-help book like this one arguably starts with a built-in readership in a way fiction doesn't. Reading the book itself, the audience is fairly legible from its own choices of language and evidence: it speaks in the vocabulary of "organisations," "subordinates," "360-degree feedback," and named workplaces (its case studies work in named firms, the way a consultant would build a client case), and its exercises assume the reader currently holds, or recently held, some position of authority over other people.

That points to a fairly specific readership: mid-to-senior managers and directors, HR and organisational-development professionals, and people newly promoted into leadership who want a mirror before they repeat what was done to them. Its secondary readership is really its distribution channel made visible: people who've worked under a difficult boss and want language for what happened to them, which is exactly the population buying it as team gifts.

The group's wider observation, that most of the authors in the room are still learning to name their actual reader, especially compared to Jacinta's fairly clear one, is common, and worth taking seriously. A few things tend to help:

- Write the back-cover copy before you finish the book, not after. If you can't name, in one sentence, who this is for and what changes for them by the last page, the manuscript is telling you the audience hasn't been decided yet.
- Look at who is already asking you the question your book answers, rather than who you'd like to be reading it. Jacinta's audience found itself first, in her own former workplace; the book followed.
- For non-fiction, audience and distribution are often the same decision. A book for professionals can be sold to the organisations they work in, not just to individual readers, as Jacinta's bulk, gifted-copy sales show.
- For fiction, audience is closer to taste than role: genre, mood, comparable authors, so it has to be discovered through readers' actual reactions (reviews, who finishes it, who recommends it onward) rather than assumed from a job title.

Closing Reflection: Read, or Just Bought?

The group closed on a genuinely good question: **would you rather someone bought your book and never opened it, or genuinely read it?** The consensus was that this depends on what kind of book it is. For a book like Jacinta's, written for impact, aimed at changing how someone actually leads, a purchase without a read is close to a failure on the book's own terms; the book only does its job if it's finished and acted on.

For fiction, the calculus is different: entertainment and enjoyment are the point, so even a partially read or shelved novel has arguably delivered something the moment it was picked up, browsed, or gifted for the pleasure of the object itself.

Asked which of the two a Kenyan buyer is more likely to pick up: the sales pattern the group already described: directors buying dozens of copies as gifts for their teams, suggests that professional non-fiction with a clear, practical promise (“this will change how you lead”) currently has an easier path to bulk, workplace-driven sales than literary fiction does, simply because it can be justified as a training or development spend, not just a personal purchase. Fiction, by contrast, tends to move through slower, more individual word-of-mouth, a real readership, but a harder one to sell into in bulk. Neither is a stronger book for it; they’re just different products moving through different rooms, which is exactly the kind of thing this group set out to notice today.

Announcement: Cohort 2 Opens for 2027

Since January, Doreen Khamala of www.doreenkhamalabooks.ke has been recruiting for Authors for a “champ-style” book club with real commitment. That group is Cohort 1, and it wraps up in October 2026 with two books still to go. Applications are now open for Cohort 2, running through 2027.

How the Authors and Writers Book Club Works

- Open to readers, writers, and authors alike — you don't need a published book to join.
- We read Kenyan-authored books, drawn from <https://doreenkhamalabooks.ke/books-by-other-kenyan-authors/>
- Committed members ONLY!
- Each month's book is chosen by spin wheel or raffle among the cohort's own selections, starting in January.
- Cohort members commit to buying and read one another's books as the months go by. This is mandatory, not optional.
- The convener also pushes each selected book out to her wider network and the main Authors & Writers Book Club, beyond the cohort itself.
- The group meets monthly to discuss the book as writers, not just as readers.
- The featured author joins the session to talk through: their writing process, craft and structure choices, how they carried the manuscript to completion, whether they worked with an editor or publisher (and how that went), or their self-publishing journey.
- Every session also covers book marketing: what's worked for that author, and what hasn't.

For Cohort 1 authors: a transition plan is already being worked on, and will be shared once the current cycle closes out in October.

To book your space in Cohort 2, email: info@doreenkhamalabooks.ke

You can read sales report of Cohort 1 authors here:
<https://doreenkhamalabooks.ke/events/>