

**From: "On becoming a leader" Warren Bennis  
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**Summarised by Andrew Gibbons**

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P 39 Core leadership ingredients:

1. A guiding vision
2. Passion
3. Integrity
4. Trust
5. Curiosity and daring

P 44 When asked what he had learnt from the presidents he had worked with, Henry Kissinger replied...

"Presidents don't do great things by dwelling on their limitations, but by focusing on their possibilities."

Bennis: "I tend to think of the differences between leaders and managers as the differences between those who master the context and those who surrender to it. There are other differences, as well, and they are enormous and crucial".

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- The manager administers, the leader innovates
- The manager copies, the leader is an original
- The manager maintains, the leader develops
- The manager focuses on systems and structure, the leader focuses on people
- The manager relies on control, the leader inspires trust
- The manager has a short range view, the leader has a long range perspective
- The manager asks how and when, the leader asks what and why
- The manager has eyes always on the bottom line, the leader's eyes are on the horizon
- The manager imitates, the leader originates
- The manager accepts the status quo, the leader challenges it
- The manager is the classic good soldier, leaders are their own people
- The manager does things right, the leader does the right thing

P 55 "No-one can teach you to become yourself"

P 56 The 4 lessons of self knowledge:

1. You are your own best teacher
2. Accept responsibility: blame no-one
3. You can learn anything you want to learn
4. True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience

Akin's modes of learning:

- |                      |                 |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Emulation         | 2. Role taking  | 3. Practical accomplishment |
| 4. Validation        | 5. Anticipation | 6. Personal growth          |
| 7. Scientific growth |                 |                             |

P 69 Jean Piaget: "Every time we teach a child something we stop him from inventing it for himself".

P 75 Botkin, Elmandjra and Malitza's three types of learning:

- |          |                |               |
|----------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Shock | 2. Maintenance | 3. Innovative |
|----------|----------------|---------------|

P 80 Bennis: "There is nothing you can do about your early life except to understand it".

P 93 Anne Bryant: "Friends are vital, because they tell you the truth".

Sydney Pollack, film director, on the value of mistakes:

P 98 "A really good actor has got to be capable of making an enormous fool of himself, otherwise no original work gets done".

P 106 John Sculley, Chief Executive of Apple computers:

"One of the biggest mistakes a person can make is to put a team together that reflects only him".

"The real role of the leader is to figure out how to make diverse people and elements work together".

P 116 Bennis:

"Most of us are shaped more by negative experiences than by positive ones. A thousand things happen in a week to each of us, but most of us remember the few lapses rather than our triumphs, because we don't reflect".

"When you're going along, and everything is working well, you don't sit down and reflect. Which is exactly the moment you should do it.

If you wait for a great mistake before you reflect, two things happen, one, since you're down, you don't get the most out of it, and two, you tend only to see the mistake, instead of all the moments in which you've been correct".

P 128 Brooke Knapp:

"The greatest opportunity for growth lies in overcoming the things you're afraid of".

P 131 Gloria Anderson:

"You can't make being a leader your principal goal, any more than you can make being happy your goal. In both cases it has to be the result not the cause".

P 133 Jim Burke, Chief Executive of Johnson and Johnson on becoming a leader:

“The process should be exciting and fun. The person who is not having fun is doing something wrong. Either his environment is stifling or he’s off base”.

P 143 Bennis: “A leader is, by definition an innovator. He does things other people haven’t done or don’t do. He does things in advance of other people. He makes new things and makes old things new”.

P 145 Kurt Lewin: “If you really want to understand something, try to change it”.

P 145 Bennis: “Unless the leader continues to evolve, to adapt and adjust to external change the organisation will sooner or later stall”.

P 148 “A leader learns early on to be comfortable with ambiguity.”

P 149 Anne Bryant: “If you’re strong, you can learn from bad bosses, but if you’re not strong it’s tough”.

P 158 Don Ritchley:

“A real essential for effective leadership is that you can force people to do very much”.

P 160 Bennis on the 4 ingredients leaders have that generate and sustain trust:

1. Constancy
2. Congruity
3. Reliability
4. Integrity

P 179 “Only a handful of organisations have even begun to tap into their primary resource, their people, much less given them the means to do what they are capable of doing. Indeed, many have taken the opposite tack, eschewing loyalty to workers, pruning rather than nurturing, and focusing almost exclusively on the bottom line”.

“Ruthless management may succeed in holding change at bay for a while, but only visionary leadership will succeed over time”.

P 179 Tom Peters’ blueprint for organisational effectiveness:

1. A flatter, less hierarchical structure
2. More autonomous units
3. An orientation toward high-value added goods and services
4. Quality controls
5. Service controls
6. Responsiveness
7. Innovative speed
8. Flexibility
9. Highly trained and skilled workers using their minds as well as their hands
10. Leaders at all levels, rather than managers

P 180 Tom Peters' key tasks for leaders in the new organisations:

1. Defining the organisations mission, so as to frame its activities and inform its workforce.
2. Creating a flexible environment in which people are not only valued, but encouraged to develop to their full potential, and treated as equals rather than subordinates.
3. Reshaping the corporate culture so that creativity, autonomy, and continuous learning replace conformity, obedience, and rote and long term growth, not short term profit is the goal.
4. Transforming the organisation from a rigid pyramid to a fluid circle, or an ever evolving network of autonomous units.
5. Encouraging innovation, experimentation, and risk taking.
6. Anticipating the future by reading the present.
7. Making new connections within the organisation, and new relationships within the workforce.
8. Making new alliances outside the organisation.
9. Constantly studying the organisation from the outside as well as the inside.
10. Identifying weak links in the chain and repairing them.
11. Thinking globally, rather than nationally or locally.
12. Identifying and responding to new and unprecedented workforce needs.
13. Being proactive rather than reactive, comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty.

P 181 Bennis: "The basis for leadership is learning, and principally learning from experience".

P 185 "As virtually every leader I talked with said, there can be no growth without risks, and no progress without mistakes...indeed, if you don't make mistakes, you aren't trying hard enough".

"But as mistakes are necessary, so is a healthy organisational attitude toward them. First, risk taking must be encouraged. Second, mistakes must be seen as an integral part of the process, so that they are regarded as normal, not abnormal. Third, corrective action rather than censure must follow".

P 189 Eric Hoffer: "In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists".

P 192 Bennis: "There are **10** personal and organisational characteristics for coping with change, forging a new future, and creating learning organisations:

**One:** Leaders manage the dream.

"All leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place, and then translate that vision into a reality".

Managing the dream can be broken into 5 parts:

1. Communicating the vision
2. Recruiting meticulously
3. Rewarding
4. Retraining
5. Reorganising

P 194 **Two:** Leaders embrace error

**Three:** Leaders encourage reflective back talk

“Leaders know the importance of having someone in their life who tells them the truth”.

**Four:** Leaders encourage dissent

“Leaders need people around them who have contrary view, who are devil’s advocates - variance sensors - who can tell the difference between what is expected and what is really going on”.

P 195 “One of the tragedies of most organisations is that people will let the leaders make mistakes when they themselves know better”.

P 196 **Five:** Leaders possess the Nobel factor - optimism, faith and hope

P 197 **Six:** Leaders understand the Pygmalion effect in management

J Sterling Livingstone suggests leaders use this effect thus:

- What managers expect of their subordinates and the way they treat them largely determine their performance and career progress
- A unique characteristic of superior managers is the ability to create high performance expectations that subordinates fulfil
- Less effective managers fail to develop similar expectations, and as a consequence, the productivity of their subordinates suffers
- Subordinates, more often than not, appear to do what they believe is expected of them”

Bennis: “The leaders’ motto is stretch don’t strain”

P 199 **Seven:** Leaders have a ‘certain touch’

“Leaders have that sense of where the culture is going to be, and where the organisation must be if it is to grow”.

**Eight:** Leaders see the long view

Bennis cites the example of a Japanese company with a 250 year business plan.

P 200 **Nine:** Leaders understand stakeholder symmetry

“They know they must balance the competing claims of all the groups with a stake in the organisation”.

P 201 **Ten:** Leaders create strategic alliances and partnerships

“The shrewd leaders of the future are going to recognise the significance of creating alliances with other organisations whose fates are correlated with their own”.

The next generation of leaders will have certain things in common:

1. Broad education
2. Boundless curiosity
3. Boundless enthusiasm
4. Belief in people and teamwork
5. Willingness to take risks
6. Devotion to long-term growth not short term profit
7. Commitment to excellence
8. Readiness
9. Virtue
10. Vision

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