

VENTURING MAGAZINE

LeaderThoughts #1 by Michael Brown

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What is Leadership? Leadership & Management

In this first of the "LeaderThoughts" series, let's tackle a basic question: what IS "leadership".

It may be a simple question, but not so.

Let's look at some leadership quotes:

"Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward a goal achievement in a given situation" --- Hersey & Blanchard

"Leadership is the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project" --- Cohen.

Leadership is influencing people — by providing purpose, direction, and motivation — while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization." --- US Army

There is a common thread in all these quotes: leadership is INFLUENCE.

It's funny, that for most of us, we usually think of leadership in a negative way. Someone giving us orders, demands that we do something we may or may not (usually not) want to do. Even seeing that quote from the US Army is interesting, as we expect that the military is all about giving orders (usually screaming them) and making people do something they don't want to do.

Of course, doing the influencing is the hard part, and is really a big part of leadership training.

And let's be careful not to confuse influence with manipulation. It's not the same. With leadership, we have a "win-win" situation. The followers win, by their success, and we as leaders win, due to their success. In manipulation we have a "win-lose" situation. We win because we get what we want, but the followers loose because they did something they probably didn't want to do, but what we wanted.

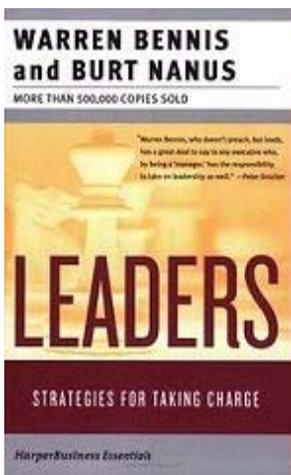
What is also important to keep in mind is that leadership is an ART, not a science. This is not to put down all the research put into it. Most of the leading people in the area of leadership development will say that as well. All that work helps us understand what leadership is and apply it. But it's all up to how you apply it, and that's where the art comes in, and I think some don't get that.

Another aspect that must be addressed is leadership and management. Too often they are confused. I see some people on other forums be critical of all the leadership skills being presented in our courses (WB, NYTL, NAYLE, etc), calling it corporate management stuff (with the implication that it thus has no place in a membership-based organization). Surprising, these are the same skills that other membership organizations teach to their members & leaders in various courses. This is what everyone uses, not just businesses/corporations.

Management and Leadership are different. Management is focused on NOW and getting things done now. Leadership is focused on the FUTURE, where we are going as a group or organization. But as leaders, we need to be doing both. As success now will enable us to have success in the future, we need to ensure we continue to exist for that future success to come about.

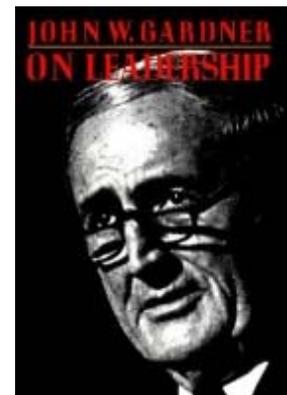
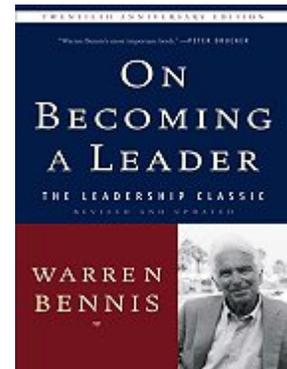
In this series, I will include some references to check out, as well as videos. Here are a few works on general leadership that may be of interest.

Warren Bennis' "On Becoming a Leader" is considered a classic. It's now in its 4th edition. When I read a prior edition a few years back, I thought it was pretty good, but at the time since I had read several other works on leadership, some of the ideas weren't new. If you are just starting out on learning leadership, you would probably enjoy more than if you are an old hat.



"Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge" by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus is another classic work, very readable.

John W. Gardner's "On Leadership" is another leadership classic that hasn't quite aged as well. Overall a good book, but in the 20+ years since it came out, things have changed.



Here are a few interesting videos on the concept of Leadership.

First up is one by Ken Blanchard on "It's always the leader":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dS0cpKj1bLY>

Another good one (ignore the end) is "Are you a leader?":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7O8s6NgAck>