

# VENTURING MAGAZINE

LeaderThoughts #20 by Michael Brown

March 2015

## 10 Top Leadership Books for Venturers (and a few more)

Recently, I started to think of what 10 books might I recommend that all Venturers read. I set a few criteria. They should be essential works. They should be works of value to Venturers as much if not more so than adults. For me, this excluded any works that were too business oriented (this eliminated works focusing on the success of a certain business or books that struck me as more management than leadership). I also have a dislike of leadership books that are more of biographies or autobiographies of certain individuals. I find works focused on how a certain person became or is a leader isn't as valuable, as it's hard to transfer what worked for one person to others. And too often I've seen people not fully grasp what the leader is really doing, and so only half implementing what he did with disastrous results. It's better to look for essential skills that several leaders have made use of, then just focusing on one person. I do like works that use real world examples, but there it's more on how different people used more or less the same skills or concepts. Next, all the works had to be easily obtainable, which meant that they are all in print and hopefully easy to find in used bookstores as well. And finally, I wanted to be sure all the works were ones I have or plan to review.



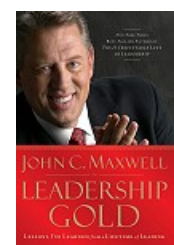
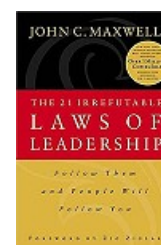
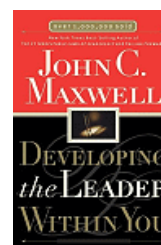
I also tried to limit it to 10, or tried being a "Top 10" list. I had problems keeping it within that, as a few works I felt needed to be paired up others. And I wasn't comfortable with ranking them from 1 to 10. So this became a "sort of top 10" list.

So I came up with the following list. I based this list on looking at similar lists compiled by other people.

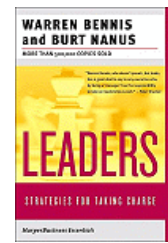
- *Developing the Leader Within You*: John C. Maxwell
- *Leaders*: Bennis & Nanus
- *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*: John C. Maxwell
- *Leadership Gold*: John C. Maxwell
- *How to Win Friends & Influence People, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* and *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking*: Dale Carnegie
- *Case for Servant Leadership*: Kent Keith
- *Leadership & OMM, OMM builds High Performing Teams* and *Self Leadership & OMM*: Ken Blanchard et al
- *Leading at a Higher Level*: Ken Blanchard
- *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *8th Habit*: Steven & Sean Covey
- *Leadership is an Art* and *Leadership Jazz*: Max De Pree

So a little more on these works.

*Developing the Leader Within You* is John Maxwell's first work on leadership. I will soon be covered this with his others in a future Thoughts on him. In many ways, I think if you are starting on your path to become a leader, this is a good first work to get. While I think that Maxwell might want to look at this work for possible updates or tweaks, I think this is an excellent first work.



*Leaders* by Walter Bennis and Burt Nanus is also considered a classical introduction to leadership. Both authors have written works on leadership, and this is a good one. It may be too corporate focused, but it's hard to find a leadership work that doesn't talk about business leadership.



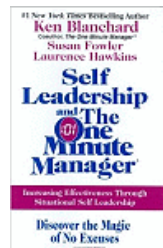
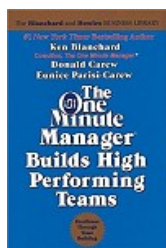
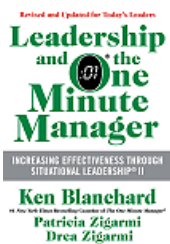
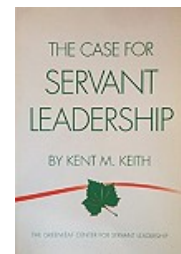
Maxwell's later *21 Laws of Leadership* has become Maxwell's most well-known work on leadership and has a 10th Anniversary edition. What's great about it is how each Law is dealt with, with examples of how following that law is important or what happens when you don't, and with information on how to apply it in your own life.

I found Maxwell's *Leadership Gold* a great collection of little leadership lessons. Each one can be used to improve yourself as a leader. Like *21 Laws*, this isn't a book that should or needs to be read cover to cover, but just picking out individual chapters and reading and studying them will benefit you.



Dale Carnegie's works are classics in the area of "self-improvement". And what he has to say is of value to anyone wanting to be a better leader (and anyone wanted to be a leader should understand they should always be learning and improving themselves). Rather than just recommend one of his works, I will actually recommend three works: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* and *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking*. These 3 are the core works of his, used for decades in the Dale Carnegie Course. At this point I can't recommend the new edition/version of *How to Win Friends* as I haven't read it, and these are all easy to find, even in used bookstores.

**Servant Leadership** is an important concept for all leaders to understand. In this series I have devoted several Thoughts to the topic, and will do so in the future. I debated as to what servant leadership work to recommend. Should I recommend Greenleaf's foundational essay. Or one of the 2 books collecting his most important essays. Instead, I felt that I should recommend Kent Keith's *The Case for Servant Leadership*, as this short book was created to be an introductory work on servant leadership as it exists today. Only then would I recommend that people follow up with Greenleaf's "The Servant as Leader" essay and other works on the subject.

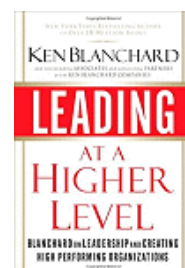


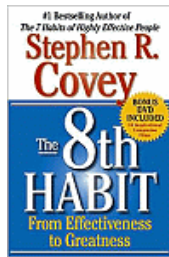
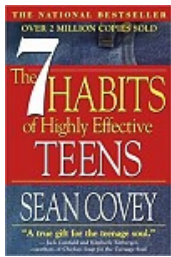
**Situational Leadership** is another important leader concept, and another I have spent time on in this series. And again, here I don't recommend one book, but the "trilogy" of works on Situational Leadership, Team Situational Leadership and Situational Self-Leadership by Ken Blanchard et al:

*Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (recently updated), *The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing*

*Teams and Self-Leadership and the One Minute Manager*. These are all short and well written works on these topics, and I encourage them to Venturers.

Ken Blanchard's *Leading at a Higher Level* is also an important work of his. Blanchard and associates have covered a lot of ground in their various works, and this volume gives a great update on many of them all in one place. It can serve as a good starting point into delving into their other leadership works.





The **7 Habits** concept is one that everyone should be looking at. Instead of recommending the main work, I felt for the Venturers they should get the one by Steven Covey's son Sean intended for teens. Learning and living these 7 habits will help them immensely in their lives. Then they should get the *8th Habit* by Covey as a follow on to that work.

Finally, I would recommend the 2 major leadership works by Max De Pree: *Leadership is an Art* and *Leadership Jazz*. These are both easy to read works on leadership, with a strong element of servant leadership. They can also serve as a great introductions to leadership.

So there you have it. My "sort of 10" leadership works for Venturers. Maybe I'll come up with a "second 10" list at some point.

