

**From: “Leaders” by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus.
Published by Harper and Row in 1986, 244 pages.
ISBN 0-06-091336-3.**

- P 2 “This book was written in the belief that leadership is the pivotal force behind successful organisations and that to create vital and viable organisations, leadership is necessary to help organisations develop a new vision of what they can be, then mobilize the organisation change toward the new vision”.
- P 8 “...what there really is a *commitment gap*. Leaders have failed to instil vision, meaning and trust in their followers. They have failed to empower them”.
- P 11 “Credibility is at a premium these days. Leaders are being scrutinised as never before. Fifty years ago this was not the case”.
- P 12 “Historically leaders have controlled rather than organised, administered repression rather than expression, and held their followers in arrestment rather than in evolution”.
- P 17 “As we see it, effective leadership can move organisations from current to future states, create visions of potential opportunities for organisations, instil within employees commitment to change and instil new cultures and strategies in organisations that mobilize and focus energy and resources.

These leaders are not born. They emerge when organisations face new problems and complexities that cannot be solved by unguided evolution. They assume responsibilities for reshaping organisational practices to adapt to environmental changes. They direct organisational changes that build confidence and empower their employees to seek new ways of doing things. They overcome resistance to change by creating visions of the future that evoke confidence in, and mastery of new organisational practices.

Vision is the commodity of leaders, and power is their currency”.

- P 20 “Books on leadership are often as majestically useless as they are pretentious. Leadership is like the abominable snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen”.
- P 21 “The problem with many organisations, and especially the ones that are failing, is that they tend to be overmanaged and underled. They may excel in the ability to handle the daily routine, yet never question whether the routine should be done at all”.
- P 26 During their in depth interviews with ninety prominent leaders across a wide variety of American business, leisure, political and social sectors they say that...” for us, four major themes slowly developed, four areas of competency, four types of human handling skills, that all ninety of our leaders embodied:

- Strategy 1: Attention through vision.
- Strategy 2: Meaning through communication.
- Strategy 3: Trust through positioning.
- Strategy 4: The deployment of self through (1) positive self regard, and (2) the

“Wallenda factor” - named after Karl Wallenda, the tight-rope walker who would (could?) not consider the possibility of failure.

P 27 “Leadership seems to be the marshalling of skills possessed by a majority but used by a minority. But it’s something that can be learned by anyone,, taught to everyone, denied to no one”.

P 28 “Management of attention through *vision* is the *creating of focus*. All ninety people interviewed had an *agenda*, an unparalleled concern with outcome. Leaders are the most results-oriented individuals in the world, and results get attention.

Their visions or intentions are compelling, and pull people towards them. Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic. These intense personalities do not have to coerce people to pay attention, they are so intent on what they are doing that, like a child absorbed with creating a sand castle in a sandbox, they draw others in”.

P 32 “Leadership is also a transaction, a transaction between leaders and followers. Neither could exist without the other. So what we discovered is that leaders also *pay attention* as well as catch it”.

P 39 “Leaders articulate and define what has previously remained implicit or unsaid”.

P 43 “Getting the message across unequivocally at every level is an absolute key”.

“Good ideas are not adopted automatically. They must be driven into practice with courageous patience”. Admiral Hyman Rickover on the difficulties encountered with approving the construction of ‘Nautilus’ the first nuclear submarine.

P 50 “In order for an organisation to have integrity, it must have an identity - that is, a sense of who it is and what it is to do”.

P 61 “We can sum up what we mean by positive self regard. It consists of three major components: knowledge of one’s strengths, the capacity to nurture and develop those strengths, and the ability to discern the fit between one’s strengths and weaknesses and the organisation’s needs”.

P 65 “Our leaders seemed to retain many of the positive characteristics of the child: enthusiasm for people; spontaneity; imagination, and an unlimited capacity to learn new behaviour”.

Emotional wisdom, as we’ve come to understand it, reflects itself in the way people relate to others. In the case of our ninety leaders, they used five key skills:

1. The ability to accept people as they are, not as you would like them to be.
2. The capacity to approach relationships and problems in terms of present rather than the past.
3. The ability to treat those who are close to you with the same courteous attention that you extend to strangers and casual acquaintances.
4. The ability to trust others, even if the risk seems great.

5. The ability to do without constant approval and recognition from others.

- P 69 The ninety leaders the authors spoke with “simply don’t think about failure, don’t even use the word. One of them said during the course of an interview that ‘a mistake is just another way of doing things’. Another said, ‘if I have an art form of leadership, it is to make as many mistakes as quickly as I can in order to learn”.
- P 71 “For a lot of people, the word ‘failure’ carries with it a finality, the absence of movement characteristic of a dead thing, to which the automatic human reaction is helpless discouragement. But for the successful leader, failure is a beginning, the springboard to hope”.
- P 74 “Criticism is a frequent by-product of significant actions. Receptivity to criticism is as necessary as it is loathsome. It tests the foundations of positive self-regard as does nothing else. And, the more valid the criticism, the more difficult it is to receive”.
- P 80 “The essential thing in organisational leadership is that the leader’s style *pulls* rather than *pushes* people on”.
- P 88 “Over and again, the leaders we spoke to told us that they did the same things when they took charge of their organisation - they paid attention to what was going on; they determined what part of the events at hand would be important for the future of the organisation; they set a new direction, and they concentrated the attention of everyone in the organisation on it”.
- P 89 “A vision is a target that beckons”.
- “The critical point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organisation, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists”.
- P 90 “With a vision, the leader provides the all-important bridge from the present to the future of the organisation”.
- P 92 “By focusing attention on the vision, the leader operates on the *emotional and spiritual resources* of the organisation, on its values, commitment, and aspirations.
- The manager by contrast, operates on the *physical resources* of the organisation, on its capital, human skills, raw materials, and technology”.
- P 93 “Great leaders often inspire their followers to high levels of achievement by showing them how their work contributes to worthwhile ends. It is an emotional appeal to some of the most fundamental of human needs - the need to be important, to make a difference, to feel useful, to be a part of a successful and worthwhile enterprise”.
- P 96 “The leader must be a superb listener, particularly to those advocating new or different images of the emerging reality...successful leaders, we have found, are *great askers* and they do pay attention”.

On where to find help in creating a vision of future success...”basically there are three sources from which to seek guidance - the past, the present, and alternative images of future possibilities”.

P 107 "Leaders are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate".

P 108 "Another way the leader communicates a new vision is by consistently acting on it personifying it".

P 152 "Fail to honour people, they fail to honour you. But the sign of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say, 'this we did for ourselves'".

P 153 "Trust is the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together. The accumulation of trust is a measure of the legitimacy of leadership. It cannot be mandated or purchased; it must be earned".

P 162 "There are four main strategies that leaders choose (sometimes unwittingly) in order to position their organisation:

1. Reactive. With this approach, the organisation waits for the change and reacts - after the fact.
2. Change the internal environment. Rather than waiting for change to happen to them, leaders can develop effective forecasting procedures to anticipate change and then 'proact' rather than react.
3. Change the external environment. This approach requires that the organisation anticipating change upon the environment itself to make the change congenial to its needs.
4. Establish a new linkage between the external and internal environments. Using this mechanism, an organisation anticipating change will attempt to establish a new relationship between its internal environments and anticipated external environments.

P 187 "When we asked our ninety leaders about the personal qualities they needed to run their organisations, they never mentioned charisma, or dressing for success, or time management, or any of the other glib formulas that pass for wisdom in the popular press.

Instead, they talked about persistence and self-knowledge; about willingness to take risks and accept losses; about commitment, consistency, and challenge. But, above all, they talked about learning".

P 188 "Leaders are perpetual learners. Some are voracious readers...many learn mainly from other people. Nearly all leaders are highly proficient in learning from experience".

"Most were able to identify a small number of mentors and key experiences that powerfully shaped their philosophies, personalities, aspirations, and operating styles".

"Learning is the essential fuel for the leader, the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas, and new challenges."

"Very simply, those who do not learn do not long survive as leaders. Leaders have discovered not just how to learn but how to learn *in an organisational context*.

P 193 The authors distinguish between *maintenance learning*, at which many managers excel,

as it is synonymous with stability and normality, and *innovative learning* which leaders need to move and develop their organisations beyond current, into future positions.

P 201 “Often overlooked is ‘unlearning’, or (the) discarding of old knowledge when actions by the organisation clash with changed reality in the external environment.

A learning organisation places a high value on these experiences because they supply a reality test and permit adjustments without which larger mistakes might be made in the future”.

P 205 “If the leader is seen as an effective learner from the environment, others will emulate that model”.

P 206 “The leader must reinforce long-range thinking, innovation and creativity”.