

## **BOOK REVIEW :**

### **On Becoming a leader by Warren Bennis**

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**Published by: Basic Books, NY**

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No of pages:254

A Book reviewed by  
**Prof. Seema Benakatti**

This book was one of the most incredible reading experiences I've ever had. Warren Bennis makes you think about yourself as a human being and a leader, which helps you connect with him. He presents numerous examples of exceptional leaders and explores the reasons behind their success in detail. It's impossible to rewrite the detailed reflections, but I want to present enough information to persuade you to read the book. In this review, I will emphasise some key characteristics that Warren Bennis believes a leader must possess.

A leader's vision is one of the most important qualities to possess. Failure will befall a leader who has a vision for where he wants his organisation to go. According to Bennis, there are many exceptional people out there who have a strong sense of purpose and a clear vision of what they want in the early stages of their careers, but as their careers progress, they become sucked into a corporate culture that forces them to follow rules rather than ideas. It's more vital to prove oneself than it is to share your thoughts and ideas. Bennis considers vision and character development to be incredibly vital.

"Passion" is the second key aspect of leadership. A passionate leader is enthusiastic about what he or she does and instils hope and inspiration in others. To acquire the trust of his or her people, a leader must possess attributes such as passion, excitement, inspiration, and optimism. To instil cultural changes in organisations, leaders must get people's support.

Another important trait of a leader is "integrity." Integrity is something that must be gained rather than something that can be acquired. Bennis divides integrity into three parts: self-awareness, candour, and maturity.

Self-awareness: As a leader, we will never be able to completely understand our strengths and shortcomings, what we are doing, and why we are doing it. A good leader must



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recognise his or her own flaws, be honest with himself, and only then can he begin the route to become a great leader.

Candour is defined by sincerity of belief, accomplishments, and a consistent commitment to "principle, and a fundamental soundness and wholeness," according to Warren Bennis. To make others happy, a leader should never sacrifice his values.

Years of experience and expertise, the ability to learn from mistakes and disappointments, and the ability to be dedicated and sincere are all indicators of maturity. Only after obtaining these attributes can a leader inspire others to follow in his or her footsteps.

"Curiosity" and "daring" are two more fundamentals of leadership. Leaders have an insatiable desire to learn about anything and everything. They are never afraid to take risks and are unconcerned about failures. They learn from their mistakes, reflect on what works well and what needs to be changed on a daily basis, and then encourage others to make those adjustments. Leaders focus on potential rather than restrictions.

These qualities do not come naturally to all leaders; they can be developed via experience, mentorship, self-reflection, and finding your passion.

Leaders should always be improving themselves, reflecting on and learning from their activities. They must believe on their own intuition. Leaders are their own raw material, and they have the ability to shape themselves into anything they desire.

Warren Bennis utilises excellent quotes from prominent people throughout his book. I'd like to highlight a few that have left an indelible mark on me.

"Good leaders succeed despite their flaws, whereas terrible leaders succeed because of their flaws."

He compares this to Abraham Lincoln, who suffered from severe depression but led the United States through its most difficult crisis. Whereas Hitler imposed his fixation on the German people and led them to commit the most heinous deeds the world has ever seen via dreams of glory.

"Without vision and virtue, competence, or knowledge, spawns technocrats." Ideologues are born by virtue that lacks vision and wisdom. Demagogues are bred by vision void of virtue and wisdom."

Transitioning from manager to leader is a life-changing experience. By understanding our goals, capabilities, ambitions, gratifying experiences, and personal and organisational values and objectives, we may allow our genuine selves to emerge. Genuine leaders, armed with this knowledge, have the confidence to alter themselves and their circumstances, which may

include changing careers or organisations if they find themselves at odds with the current corporate culture.

Many academics and businesses have begun to question the direction of business education, which is understandable. Warren G. Bennis, a leadership expert, claims that business schools have lost their way as a result of the scientific approach that dominates business research and education. Academics in business are promoted based on their research's mathematical rigour rather than its applicability. In class, students will learn formalised management tools from highly skilled academics who are versed in mathematics. These tools are adequate for researching financial valuation procedures, but they are less useful when studying leadership and organisational behaviour. Bennis maintained that students could learn a lot more about these areas if they took a literature class. Fiction may teach you as much as a business textbook on leadership and organisational behaviour.

As a result, this book is an excellent guide to becoming a leader. This book can be classified as a self-help book, but it can also be used as a guide for academic leadership classes.

