

GREAT LEADERS INVENT THEMSELVES

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Look at the mess we're in. Why doesn't somebody do something? When was the last time you heard or even thought that? Look! Up in the air, it's Superman! We're saved. What a hero. If only I had his powers I could be a hero. If only I was born a leader.

Wrong! The big myth is that leaders are born. The reality, in the words of Warren Bennis, author of *On Becoming a Leader*, is "Leaders Invent Themselves".

Leaders possess the core virtues within themselves. One day the spark ignites the leader to do what must be done. Leadership is about doing the right thing. After rescuing his crew from shark-infested waters, John F Kennedy was asked, "How did you become a hero?" He shrugged, "It was involuntary, they sank my boat."

Although leaders often possess management and leadership skills, true leadership comes from within. Five key virtues make up the heart of leadership: Vision; Integrity; Hunger; Risk and Passion.

Vision

The ability to see something that no one else can. It might be a break through product, service or discovery. But you know it can be done. Wayne Gretzky skates to where the puck will be, not where it is.

Integrity

My high school motto was Know Thyself. It only took me twenty years to understand what it meant. Do you know who you are and what you stand for?

Hunger

The desire to learn, grow and create is so strong it gnaws at you. It's why people climb mountains, why Roger Banister broke the 4-minute mile, why Bill Gates built Microsoft, why there is no limit to what we can do.

Risk

Leaders challenge the norm. Columbus sailed beyond the known world when everyone knew that he would fall off the edge. Risk spawns the courage to stand in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square or to challenge IBM in the computer business.

Passion

Would you rather follow someone who is logical or passionate? Terry Fox had a passion. Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for 27 years, only had to recant his beliefs to be released. Instead he chose to follow his passion. He reminds us, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us."

All five of these virtues must be present in a leader. Look for these virtues in yourself and those around you.

If you are looking for a role model - pick Batman. There is only one Superman, born on Krypton to be a hero on Earth. But everyone can be a Batman. He is the only super hero without super powers. Yet he stands head to head with Superman for respect. Batman is just a human who developed his thinking and physical skills. He possessed the core leadership virtues of Vision, Integrity, Hunger, Risk, and Passion.

Often it is something traumatic that awakens leaders - consider Terry Fox, Churchill and Kennedy. But any dramatic change can awaken the leader within you. Take advantage of the changes you face to awaken your leader within. It is curious that today's entrepreneurs exhibit the leadership qualities of early explorers.

We all have the potential to be leaders. Can you stand the light?