

# LEADERSHIP *Warren Bennis* Excellence



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

AUGUST 2009

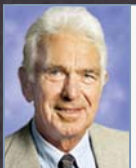
**Paradox  
of Risk**

**Re-Write  
the Future**

**Strategic  
Restructuring**

**Lens of Success  
Be Learning Agile**

**Kevin Cashman  
Leadership Consultant**



*"Leadership Excellence is an exceptional way to learn and then apply the best and latest ideas in the field of leadership."*

—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND  
USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

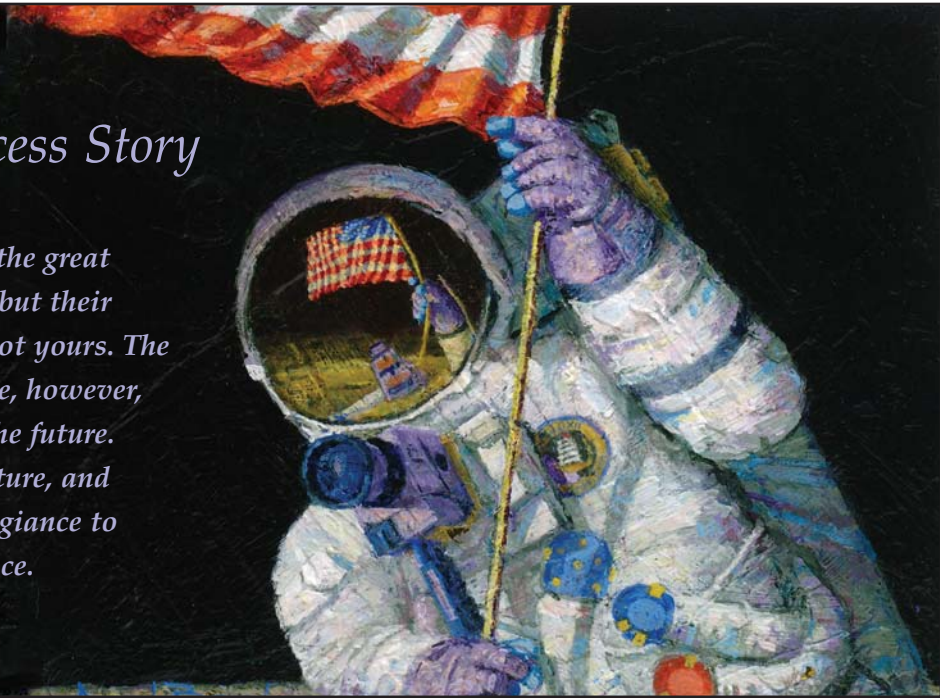
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## American Success Story

*You can learn from the great leaders of the past, but their circumstances are not yours. The past can be prologue, however, if you understand the future. Create your own future, and take an oath of allegiance to Leadership Excellence.*



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## Power of Collaboration

*Being a leader of a great group.*



by Dede Henley

WARREN BENNIS SAID, “There are groups, and then *Great Groups* that come together and accomplish the extraordinary.” To become a Great Group, you need to engage in five elements of collaboration:

**1. Stay connected to a compelling purpose.** The purpose reminds people of the larger idea of which they’re part. Teams flounder when members are unsure why they’re doing what they’re doing or how it fits into the larger scheme of things. When well-crafted, a compelling purpose has a powerful and irresistible effect. Team members feel like they are on a mission. They must put their talent and creativity into the tasks at hand. Leaders of Great Groups remind team members of *why* and *for what* they are giving their time and energy.

**2. Cultivate a culture of trust and respect.** Co-workers don’t have to *like* each other to work together, but they must *trust and respect* each other. Cultivating *trust and respect* begins with hiring talented people and putting the right person in the right job. When the person and the task are well matched, great things happen. Sometimes, it’s making the tough call—addressing underperformance or disruptive behavior. Great team leaders devote much time to cultivating trust (*going slow to go fast*), creating a culture where conflicts can be resolved in healthy ways.

**3. Increase competence in three dimensions**—emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

- *Emotional Competence* is about increased self-awareness, authenticity, empathy, motivation, and social skill. It enables us to handle impulses and emotions well and *choose* how we act and react.

- *Physical Competence* is about paying attention to our physical well-being and encouraging those we work with to do the same. If we are tired, worn out, or stressed, we can’t contribute or collaborate. Physical energy helps us manage our emotions, sustain concen-

tration, think creatively, and maintain focus on our shared purpose.

- *Intellectual competence* isn’t just about being smart and having skills. It’s about bringing our best thinking to a project. We must think and work creatively and collaboratively; engage in shared problem-solving; sustain focus, maintain optimism, and access both the left and the right brain; take in sensory data—sight, smell, taste, touch, sound, and feelings—without boundaries. It opens up possibilities. You can think big thoughts, because there is no association to the past or the future.

**4. Persevere in the face of breakdown and failure.** As difficult as failure is, it is inevitable for teams that are stretching and growing and trying to make a difference. How that failure is dealt with speaks to how successful a team will be in reaching goals. When faced with a setback, Great Groups get back up, get on track, and keep going. They fail fast. They don’t dwell on the failure. They focus on fulfilling their compelling purpose. They venture into the unknown and learn along the way. They rarely dwell on failure except as something to learn from.

Failure suggests that we must try another way. At the moment of failure we gain access to new levels of creativity. How we deal with failure, how we react when things go awry, says a lot about our ability to cultivate a Great Group. Leaders who acknowledge failure, look past it without trying to lay blame, and

choose to learn from it, gain a powerful relationship to failure. Winston Churchill said: “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

**5. Engage the power of appreciation.** Warren Bennis notes, “Appreciation makes everyone feel that they’re at the heart of things, that they matter. Then, people feel they are making a difference.” Most people leave their jobs because they feel underappreciated. Appreciation is a powerful tool for cultivating Great Groups—and it doesn’t cost you a cent!

These five elements take practice, contemplation, and consideration. I invite you to practice just one element. Try something new, seek feedback, and expand your skill. This is how you become a leader of a Great Group. **LE**

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**ACTION:** *Become a leader of a great group.*

