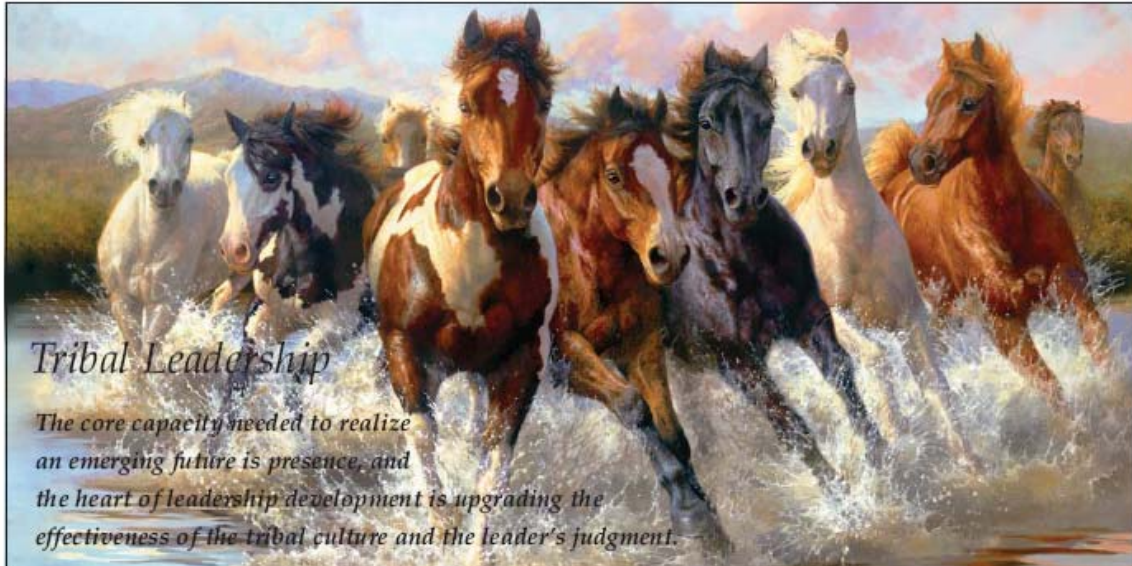


LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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Tribal Leadership

The core capacity needed to realize an emerging future is presence, and the heart of leadership development is upgrading the effectiveness of the tribal culture and the leader's judgment.

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Form and Essence

Integrate both in your leadership.



by Michael Leimbach

THE PURPOSE OF A leader is to engage others in committing their full energy to creating value and success. Leaders who fulfill this purpose successfully integrate the essence and form of effective leadership.

What Is Leadership Essence?

Leadership essence is composed of the qualities that give leaders their identity. It is the “being” of leadership. Many ineffective leaders aspire to a leadership position because of what they believe they will be enabled to do; they want the power and authority to do things their own way. But most effective leaders begin their development by asking themselves not what they can do as a leader, but what kind of leader they want to be. They focus on the ‘being’ of leadership, the self-awareness of the values and principles that they bring to their leadership. Whether you call it social intelligence, EQ, or values, leadership essence is as important as the skills that leaders bring to the job, if not more.

There are three components of leadership essence: 1) *personal character*—the inner strength to stay steadfast and decisive in the face of adversity; 2) *social character*—having deep respect for others, showing compassion, and valuing individual differences; and 3) *organizational character*—acting for the good of the community, customers, and company, ahead of personal needs.

Leadership essence is comprised of values, characteristics, and purpose that determines what you want to be as a leader. You likely know a leader who serves as a role model for leadership essence—a leader who demonstrates a true interest in you as a person, who mentors or supports you as you grow, and who always seems to make decisions based on a profound clarity of purpose and intent. People are drawn to and give maximum energy to this kind of leader. You can also probably recall a leader with little essence—a leader who gets efficient behavior, but not impas-

sioned action. These leaders give the impression of expecting a lot from others, but not much from themselves. Since you do not know or trust their intent, you give compliance, but not commitment.

What Is Leadership Form?

While essence is the foundation of effective leadership, it must be supplemented by the skills and knowledge needed to execute on those values and principles; otherwise, the leader fails to produce tangible results. This is what we call *leadership form*.

In the past, leaders were encouraged to play two central roles: managers (do things right) and leaders (do the right things). Today’s multi-generational work force, more knowledgeable and educated employees, greater reliance



on cross-functional collaborations, and global work teams all require leaders to fulfill four core roles: visionary, tactician, contributor, and facilitator.

Each role has a mission to achieve. The *visionary* sets direction; the *tactician* puts plans and processes in place; the *facilitator* ensures that team members and stakeholders are on board; and the *contributor* ensures that the leader’s talents are used. Great leadership means effectively integrating the four roles with leadership essence.

A leader doesn’t choose roles based on his or her personal style; rather, the four are complementary components of every leadership position. While emphasis on each role may change with position and level, all four roles are always required for effective leadership.

Leading with Form and Essence

How can you lead with form and essence? We believe that you *must* develop form and essence to improve

leadership performance—you can’t grow the leader without growing the person. Developing leadership form and essence requires getting leaders to acknowledge their value systems, increase their self-awareness, experience the impact in their lives, and break old patterns of thinking.

To developing the form and essence of leadership, take six core steps:

1. **Define your framework for essence.** What does your company stand for—your values, principles, and beliefs?

2. **Know how others perceive your character (essence) and skills (form).** You can achieve this through informal dialogue or a 360-feedback process.

Since most 360-feedback processes focus on form, choose carefully.

3. **Reflect on your decisions and how your values and beliefs are exhibited through your actions.** Bringing beliefs and actions into alignment is central to integrating form and essence.

4. **Create a culture of leadership form and essence.** You can’t just send leaders away for training on form and essence and expect change. Nothing changes until managers’ behavior changes—and their behavior doesn’t change until leadership culture changes.

5. **Supply tools, process, and supports for living form and essence.**

Templates for decision-making and leadership dashboards that address the elements of character and the four roles are just two ways you can imbed form and essence into the workplace.

6. **Add stretch experiences to develop leadership form and essence.** Leaders need to make decisions based on a deep exploration of their values. By being presented with too little, inconsistent, or vague information, leaders are required to draw on their values and character to come to conclusions.

Through experiences, coaching and support, you can grow leadership form and essence. Effective leadership is about both—a clarity of purpose for what you want to be as a leader and the ability to execute the roles of visionary, tactician, facilitator and contributor. Only by integrating essence and form can you effectively engage others in committing their energy, creativity, and talents. To leaders who are role models for this integration, leadership is being of service to others; their energy, excitement, and hope about the future inspire all around them. LE

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ACTION: Integrate your form and essence.