

Leadership is a Commitment

From his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, listen in to Warren Bennis, Distinguished Professor of Business Administration at USC:

"I'm not talking about traits that you're born with and can't change. As countless deposed kings and hapless heirs to great fortunes can attest, true leaders are not born, but made, and usually self-made. Leaders invent themselves. They are not, by the way, made in a single weekend seminar, as many of the leadership-theory spokesmen claim. I've come to think of that one as the microwave theory: pop in Mr. and Mrs. Average and out pops McLeader in sixty seconds."

"I would argue that more leaders have been made by accident, circumstance, sheer grit, or will than have been made by all the leadership courses put together. Leadership courses can only teach skills. They can't teach character or vision."

"Life on this turbulent, complex planet is no longer linear and sequential, one thing logically leading to another. It is spontaneous, contrary, unexpected, and ambiguous. Things do not happen according to plan, and they are not reducible to tidy models. We persist in grasping at neat, simple answers, when we should be questioning everything."

"The best information we have suggests that adults learn best when they take charge of their own learning. Taking charge of your own learning is a part of taking charge of your life, which is the *sine qua non* in becoming an integrated person."

By now, I'm sure you're asking, "Okay, Bruce, what's the point?" The point is this, that having grown up in an American educational system, most of us tend to think that if we just follow a prescribed course of study we will become what we set out to be. If you want to be a leader, take a leadership course. If you want to be a teacher, take a course in teaching. If you want to be a carpenter, take a course on carpentry. And if you want to be a fully devoted follower of Christ, then take a discipleship course.

But the problem is that leaders (and disciples) are rarely formed that way. The process of transformation - of becoming a leader (or a disciple) is usually messy. It is "spontaneous, contrary, unexpected and ambiguous." It is not linear and sequential. Leaders and disciples aren't produced in a weekend seminar. They are made - and usually self-made. In other words, the best leaders (and disciples) were those who took charge of their own learning. Those who never thought they arrived. Those who refused to place the responsibility of learning on someone's shoulders. Those who weren't content to just "get by" but who were willing to do the hard work of transformation - those are the ones who became great leaders (and I would say, the ones who become great disciples).

In other words, one of the key ingredients for someone becoming a great leader is the same as that of becoming a fully devoted follower - *ownership of the learning process*. People continually walk into our church hoping that by absorbing what we say their lives can be transformed - but that just won't happen - no matter how good our "process" and teaching are. Why? Because fully devoted followers aren't produced by going through a program. Programs can help but we can't mass produce fully devoted followers. The only way you, or anyone, can

become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ is by taking over ownership of the learning process.

"What does that look like?" It looks like lots of things. It looks like you examining yourself regularly and asking, "How am I doing?" "Where am I strong?" "Where am I weak?" It looks like personal development. It looks like finding mentors (people who can help you take the next step in your relationship with God). It looks like you contacting people for help. It looks like you going to the bookstore (or the SCCC library) and finding good books to read, etc. Bottom line, if you want to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ then you'll need to take over ownership of the process. I, and our staff, will do our best to provide for you the best tools, resources and programs we can - but, remember, disciples aren't produced through discipleship courses - they're made one at a time.

D.L Moody once said, "If this world is going to be reached, I am convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent. After all, there are comparatively few people in the world who have great talents."

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