

# LEADERSHIP *Warren Bennis* JANUARY 2008 Excellence

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—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND  
USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

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4. **Be prompt in answering their “call lights.”** When a patient has a need, they “call” for assistance; watch for instances where your employee “calls” for help, verbally or otherwise. Address each concern and attempt to meet their needs as soon as possible.

5. **Explain procedures and changes.** Make sure your people know why the changes are taking place and reiterate their importance. While it may not be an easy course, clarify the good that will come from it. Reinforce how their cooperation and positive approach will greatly affect the workplace.

6. **Communicate often and clearly.** Keep your employees up to date with what is happening so they feel more involved and less afraid of change. If they have concerns, be sure to listen first—without talking or interruptions. A gentle touch on the hand or shoulder conveys sincerity and interest.

7. **Ease their “pain.”** Make honest efforts to relieve the pain. Ask for suggestions. If the pain is personal, such as a relative passing away, be considerate. Offer them a day off or an additional paid day of vacation. Send flowers or a sympathy card to show that you care.

8. **Promote independence and self-sufficiency.** Strengthen people. Offer continuing education. Compensate them and adapt their schedules so they can gain new skills. Give them as much control as possible, and they are more likely to cooperate with the “treatment plan” and other changes.

9. **“Change positions.”** Being in the same position too long can be uncomfortable or stifling. Suggest a transfer within the department or organization. Offer flexible shifts, telecommuting, or job sharing. Encourage people to grow in their skill sets and job responsibilities.

10. **Provide them “nourishment.”** Help nurture their minds, bodies and spirits. Remind them to take breaks, eat meals, and ask for help. Provide inspirational, encouraging books, periodicals, and speakers. Bring in a massage therapist after a stressful quarter or show your appreciation with a free lunch during a successful period.

Implementing these 10 tips creates a “care plan” that strengthens people, promotes a positive culture, and boosts productivity, creativity, loyalty, and the bottom line. Giving employees a dose of the same medicine nurses give their patients results in greater retention. **LE**

*LeAnn Thieman, LPN, CSP, is an acclaimed speaker and co-author of Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul, Second Dose. Call 1-877-844-3626 or visit: [www.NurseRecruitmentandRetention.com](http://www.NurseRecruitmentandRetention.com).*

**ACTION:** Give people a dose of TLC.

## Building Trust

*I see skiing as a metaphor.*



by Lance Secretan

**L**AST WINTER, I TOOK ONE of several groups of leaders to the top of a 12,400 foot mountain. They were visiting with me in my Colorado home to learn how to make breakthroughs in their skiing and leadership skills.

Skiing is a metaphor. I teach intermediate skiers how to ski double-black diamond runs in one day. Most skiers say it can't be done, but we do it as routine. First, we ask skiers to open themselves to new ideas and thinking and to let go of their existing, outmoded beliefs and techniques. This requires *courage*. Then we teach them how to be *authentic* on the mountain. We ask them to model *service* and to tell the *truth* (*I am cold, I'm afraid, I'm hungry*). We model a loving teaching style and ask them to be loving in interactions with each other and to be *effective*.

These are the qualities of a great leader—courage, authenticity, service, truthfulness, love, and effectiveness. Learning how to ski double-black diamonds in one day is the mountain equivalent of transforming leadership style and corporate culture and passion in a short period of time—both are within the reach of those who are passionate and yearning to grow as leaders.

After a series of wonderful runs, we disembarked from the button tow at the top of the tallest mountain in the area, only to be met by a sudden snowstorm, with ferocious winds that arrived without warning and visibility declining to about eight feet. We were the only people at the top of the mountain, and with no way down except by walking and carrying our skis. I huddled with my team in the storm.

### Here Is the Plan

“Here is the plan”, I told them. “The only way off the peak is to ski down the side of the mountain for about 1,000 feet as quickly as we can, in order to build up enough speed to shoot up the other side. But we won't be able to see anything, and you don't know the mountain. So, I will ski first,

because I know the terrain like the back of my hand. I want you to ski right behind me as close as possible, one after the other. Watch my skis—it will be the only thing you will be able to see in the whiteout. If you see the tails of my skis going up and down, you will know I've just gone over a bump and you can brace yourself accordingly. If my skis turn, follow the direction they take. Trust me—we are going to be okay.”

It went exactly as planned—a team of courageous, trusting, and safe skiers and leaders high-fived their success after we zoomed into the void together and arrived safely on the other side—all in one piece.

Six months later we held a reunion conference call with this team and relived the euphoria of our experiences.

### Sources of Trust

What are the sources of the *trust* and *courage* that make for the essential components of leadership, I wondered? Why did they trust me? Why were they courageous? We know how important trust and courage are, but how are they acquired or bestowed? Every leader wants to know this.

One person replied, “I trusted you because you loved me—I could see it in your eyes, and I knew you wouldn't do anything that would hurt me.” This got me to thinking about how important love is in building trust. Another said, “On the first day you explained how to ski moguls, then

you demonstrated it, then you asked us to do it, then you explained and coached us. I trusted you from then on because you helped us to grow safely.” Another said, “You never forced us to go beyond our potential competence—out of our comfort zone, yes, but not out of our possible mastery”. Another said, “You didn't buy into my fear—you simply didn't think my fears were justified. I thought about your view of me and then I thought about my view of me, and I decided that I liked your view better—so I decided to trust you.”

We had fun, we grew and learned together, we laughed and stretched ourselves, and we looked out for each other. Courage, trust and love—magic and essential ingredients for leaders in quest of the extraordinary. **LE**

*Lance Secretan is an expert in leadership development. Visit [www.Secretan.com](http://www.Secretan.com).*

**ACTION:** Build trust in your team.

