

*"The Feiner Points of Leadership" offers fifty insightful laws covering everything from managing tough bosses and difficult subordinates, to dealing with uncooperative colleagues, to overcoming resistance to corporate change.*

I knew I was supposed to be sensitive and allow my people to have a sense of involvement, but all the same I believed that they expected me, as their leader, to tell them or show them what to do-to prescribe a course of action. I was attempting, without fully realizing it, to conform to the "heroic individual" concept of leadership. So when I took my senior team to Hurricane Island, off the coast of Maine, on a six-day Outward Bound team-building exercise, I carried this concept of leadership with me. The Hurricane Island experience began with a day of land-based exercises. My eight-person team was pumped and ready to go. After a few hours of orientation, we were asked to confront our first challenge: We contemplated the wall, each of us thinking about a solution to this puzzle. After a few seconds, people began to volunteer their ideas, each realizing the flaw in the suggested solution the longer he or she explained it. I waited, infinitely patient and super-sensitive leader that I was. After about five minutes, people became quieter, and my moment to lead had arrived. I presented my analysis of the problem, and laid out the solution I had in mind. The team listened to my instructions carefully. I outlined another approach, which again stranded two team members. After a little more deliberation, and then more pushing and shoving, the third plan I suggested ended in pretty much the same way. I began to feel desperate - here I was, the captain of the ship, with a crew that expected me to save the day, to solve this problem, and to lead them to success, and we were getting precisely nowhere. What was she talking about? How could I turn to the team for advice at this point without their losing respect for my leadership authority? I looked again at Anita, my desperation mounting. She shot me a reassuring glance. I called a time-out. This is trickier than we thought. People began to brainstorm, asking rather than telling. In a matter of about thirty-five minutes, we-the team-had sorted out the most plausible options and twenty minutes later the entire group was over the wall, the preceding two hours of futility behind us. What worked in this situation was not strategy, was not oratory, was not a sense of mission. It was not my following a "heroic individual" approach. In this instance, giving the team a say in the decision enhanced my leadership, and enabled us to succeed. When it comes to common perceptions of leadership, however, the heroic individual model-what has been called the Myth of the Great Man-has proven remarkably resilient. It holds that a leader is a larger-than-life, heroic individual; a leader is valiant, courageous, and stands alone at the summit of an organization; a leader devises strategy, delivers moving oratory, defines a grand vision. This is the concept of the leader that many of us carry around in our heads, and we continue to do so despite a number of recent attempts by some of the best thinkers in the field to redefine leadership in less swashbuckling terms. Perhaps the most prominent voice in this movement is that of Warren Bennis. In his groundbreaking book *Organizing Genius*, Bennis provides six case studies that show leaders achieving success not as individuals, but through their skill at working with their teams. Bennis points out that Steve Jobs, generally assumed to be the lone genius behind the creation of the Apple Macintosh, was not a technical expert that was his best friend, Steve Wozniak, but was supported by a large team of developers who put in the hundred-hour weeks necessary to the success of the project. Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project as the classic example of harnessing the talents of others: Oppenheimer led the project to a successful conclusion, despite his reserved demeanor, despite his inexperience leading large groups twenty-five hundred scientists were recruited to work at Los Alamos, and despite the fact that he was not the most technically able scientist on the team seven Nobel Prizes were awarded to Manhattan Project physicists later in their careers; Oppenheimer was not among them. What Bennis and Gardner challenge, in these various examples, is our tendency to attribute successes of human endeavor to a single individual. We often think of Jobs as the father of the Mac, Disney as the father of animation, and Oppenheimer as the father of the atomic age. Did Jobs, Disney, and Oppenheimer possess incredible talents? Of course they did, perhaps even genius. Yet each only achieved what he did through others. And arguably each would have achieved much less were it not for skills at energizing, motivating, and inspiring people that are greatly removed from the vision-strategy-oratory skills that most of us associate with

leadership. The revised thinking encourages us to view leadership not as "an inherently individual phenomenon," where we intertwine leadership with solitary heroics, but rather as a process of harnessing and directing the talents of others. Bennis, in place of the theory of the Great Man, offers us the model of the Great Group. There is another reason that the Great Man model is nearer myth than reality: If we examine the enormity of the challenge facing the modern leader, it becomes clear that individual leadership is simply not feasible. The world is far too complex for a man or woman to be able to single-handedly resolve the problems of the day. Further, organizations and the problems they face are themselves too complex for a person to lead by himself or herself. The human dimension complicates exponentially the rational and logical model of the way these organizations are supposed to work. So complexity-of the world, and of the organizations in it-means that leadership can never be something practiced by an individual in isolation. But despite these assaults, and despite the impossibilities of individual leadership in the modern world, the Great Man Myth is still alive and kicking. When I ask audiences, whether composed of MBA candidates, experienced managers, or people at any level in between, to name figures, living or dead, who embody great leadership, the lists are always remarkably similar. Patton, Martin Luther King, Jr. When I ask these audiences what the great leaders on their list have in common, their responses usually reflect the concept of leadership as an individual, heroic phenomenon and, judging by the lists my audiences generate, an almost exclusively male phenomenon at that. These audiences are generally composed of intelligent people with not insignificant experience in the professional world. Yet this tendency to deify leaders, and to ascribe to them superhuman powers, persists. Leaders do a huge number of different things each day. Some are visible to us; most are not. When we think of great leaders, we not surprisingly think of visible leaders, and of what those leaders do that we see. We then again, not surprisingly equate those things that we see these leaders doing with what great leaders doâ€” and what we see, primarily, are speeches and articles and interviews about vision and strategy, hence our view of the leader as the orator who single-handedly shapes the future path. But leadership is like an iceberg: Ninety percent of it is hidden below the surface. To form our impressions of leaders based on only their public activities relies on a dangerously biased sampling of what really goes on. Yet this is precisely what most of us do. This book attempts to set the record straight, by revealing the ninety percent of leadership beneath the tip of the iceberg. Leadership is the aggregation of hundreds upon hundreds of small interactions-most of which take place out of our sight-projected across layer upon layer of relationships, day in and day out. It is these relationships that form the substance of organizational life-a fact that the Great Man Myth, centered as it is on the power of the individual, largely fails to take into account. Anything that an organization achieves is achieved by a group of people working together: At the simplest level, the leader is a leader because he or she can enable that group to deliver- and the only way to do this is through the relationships that define the group. To see leadership as the ability to achieve great success through others is a critical advance-in that it moves beyond the mythology of individual genius-but this approach still has a key shortcoming. It stops short of offering a visceral understanding of how leaders do what they actually do. We are told that leaders build Great Groups or Hot Teams; we are told that leaders Establish Direction, Align People, and Motivate and Inspire; we are told that leaders have employees who feel empowered. But these are whats, not hows: The people I once coached at Pepsi, my current clients, and my MBA students all want to know how they go about dealing with the endless array of leadership challenges. They want the tactical details of how to handle a difficult subordinate or an unreasonable boss, how to manage conflict, or how to lead a change process. What distinguishes truly great leaders-and what is required of any discussion of leadership if it is to be helpful to current or aspiring leaders-is an understanding of these hows. How do you build a great team? How do you motivate and inspire your people? How do you take people with you? The remainder of this book, then, goes beneath the tip of the iceberg to reveal the invisible ninety percent of leadership, and presents this ninety percent as a series of hows. It provides a basic framework of laws for the High-Performance Leader, which encompass the hows of leading subordinates, bosses, and peers. In fact, there are fifty laws in this book, provided to tackle the endless array of challenges we face in organizational life. We should address two characteristics of the hows of leadership in advance. They challenge, argue with, and persuade people up and down the organization regarding their ideas. They give and solicit feed-back. They get to know their people

and what makes them tick. They coach and mentor. They encourage debate, and the conflict of ideas. They hold people accountable. They tell uncomfortable truths. They dive deep into the details. They build coalitions and alliances. They do this every day, sometimes in formal, scheduled interactions staff meetings or one-on-ones , but also in informal, unscheduled, and frequent transactions with members of their team. The second characteristic of the hows of leadership is this: To excel in all of them is far from easy. The laws are surprisingly difficult to implement with any level of consistency. Any effective leader must sustain a huge number of relationships, and this requires heroic and largely unseen effort. This is not an oversight on my part. But these occasions are much rarer than most people assume, and a new strategy is generally developed by a team of people, not by an all-seeing, all-knowing individual leader. When the business model upon which Steve Case and Gerald Levin both of whom have now left the company had constructed their merger became invalid, Dick Parsons, the new CEO, needed to build a new strategy-with the help and involvement of his entire team. If the laws are applied, however, magic happens.

*"The Feiner Points of Leadership goes well beyond the standard debate of what leadership is and provides a pragmatic 'how-to' on leading and influencing others, from the most difficult subordinate to the most unreasonable boss.*

The Feiner Points offers business managers real "hands-on" practical solutions for navigating the treacherous corporate world. He also discusses his own personal challenges in penning his first book. What prompted you to write a book about leadership? I had never really thought of writing book. They encouraged me to write down my concepts. As the class grew in popularity, my students continued to insist that I write a book. How difficult was it to make the switch from teaching to writing? I am quite passionate about the issues surrounding effective business leadership. I am a jogger, and have run every day for 30 years, rain or snow. So, for me to shut the door and sit down to write two to four hours per day was not an earth shattering change. The difficulty was in not knowing how well I was doing. One day I would feel as if I had really nailed what I wanted to say. Did you have any help? A former student was very helpful in thinking about how best to organize and structure the book. But, as a first time author, how did you get all the way to Warner in the first place? Once I decided to write the book, I told a writer friend I wanted to talk to a professional about the marketability of the concepts. I want to talk to you in person about the about the concepts and ideas for the book. It took me three months to write the book proposal and a formal chapter. The agent shopped the proposal to five publishers. We got a couple of offers and decided on Warner because they had a hands on, real world approach to publishing. I think Warner liked book because the approach is practical, hands on, real world. After you turned in the finished manuscript to Rick Wolff , did he require many revisions? I had sent him the first half of book, so he had given me feedback along the way. The feedback he did give me was highly relevant to making the book better. It was Rick who suggested I explode the table of contents, and that I add a summary of laws at the end of every chapter. Leading is a difficult task. There are more than a few rules for doing the job effectively. In fact, there are 50 laws. Too often people get obsessed with their own success, their own growth, their own career. They become so self absorbed that they neglect the needs and aspirations of their people. In your book, you point out that there is a real difference between leadership and management. What is that specific difference? First, organizations need both leadership and management. So leaders need both sets of skills, whether managing 50 or employees. Management focuses on measuring results and solving problems. The company becomes burdened with too many policies and rules and procedures. A manager also needs leadership skills, the ability to look out onto the horizon and be adaptive to new regulations, new products, new competition. Leadership is ultimately about producing change. Each job requires that a person use entirely different parts of the brain. General Motors is one example of a company that became too process oriented. They once owned 50 percent of the automobile market. Today their market share has fallen to 28 percent. The electronics and steel industries have gone the same way. These industries became too focused on order and predictability, and less focused on being adaptive. Leadership is about producing change. This is not easy. Leading is trickier than managing. First and foremost, people must understand that the notion of treating everybody equal is silly! A leader must learn the best way to lead individuals. People need to be treated equitably, not equally. A leader takes interest in what makes his or her people run"their hopes, dreams, and fears. The leader asks under what circumstances will each individual give his her her best. People fear change, even positive change. As miserable as they may be in present circumstances, the unexpected is even more frightening. The certainty of misery is preferable to the misery of uncertainty. Are you working on another book? Currently I am working on promoting this book. In teaching thousands of MBA students and executives, I have found that they know what they are supposed to do. Leaders are supposed to motivate and inspire their colleagues. They know the "whats" of what they should do. But they want to know the "hows. My book focuses on the "hows. Do you have any advice for the writer struggling to break into the business? You have to promote yourself. Along with all the effort, you need a lot of luck and good reviews. The shelves are crowded. So many books go unnoticed. What is the one thing you want people to come away with from having read your book? Even with bad bosses and hard-to-manage subordinates, people can shape conditions

for their own success, and make organizational life more fulfilling. The question is how can you handle a Nucklehead? The solutions can be electrifying, exciting, and truly nourishing.

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