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## Gurus on Leadership: A Book Review

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# **Book Review**

## **of**

# ***Gurus on Leadership***

**M. RINIVASA RAO, Reviewer**



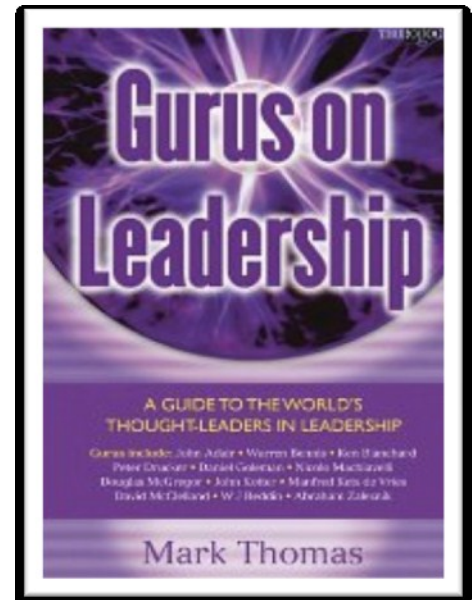
**M. SRINIVASA RAO**  
**Sri Krishna Nagar, India**

### **Introduction**

Mark A. Thomas, the author of “Gurus on Leadership,” precludes the book by discussing the fallout of Enron as well as the consequences produced by other corporate scandals such as Rite Aid, Tyco, Imclone Systems, Global Crossing, and Computer Associates. The author outlines the devastating effects on various stakeholders caused by the leaders of companies including Mirror Group, Polly Peck, Marconi, Equitable Life, Marks and Spencer, and British

*There comes a time in life when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor political, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right.*

– Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King



**Mark A. Thomas, Author,**  
**Thorogood Publishing Ltd.,**  
**London, UK 2006©**

Airways. Thomas states, “During the Enron and Wall Street scandals, both *The Economist* and *Business Week* magazines sought to address the leadership issue in depth.”

## **What Does the Book Provide?**

The book provides the profiles and contributions of various leadership notables in the global domain. These subjects include:

- (1) **John Adair** (Action Centered Leadership);
- (2) **Warren Bennis** (The “Dean of Leadership Gurus”);
- (3) **Robert Blake, Jane Mouton, Ken Blanchard** (The One-Minute Manager);
- (4) **David Brent** (a modern leadership icon);
- (5) **Peter Drucker** (management by objectives);
- (6) **Fred Fiedler** (the contingency theory man);
- (7) **Daniel Goleman** (the emotional intelligence man);
- (8) **Paul Hersey** (situational leadership);
- (9) **Manfred Kets de Vries** (the psychology of leadership);
- (10) **John Kotter** (leaders and change);
- (11) **James Kouzes, Barry Posner** (leadership and followership);
- (12) **Nicolo Machiavelli** (“The Prince”);
- (13) **Abraham Maslow** (the motivation man);
- (14) **Douglas McGregor** (Theory X and Theory Y – the “carrot and stick” approach);
- (15) **David McClelland** (achievement, affiliation, and power motivation);
- (16) **Tom Peters** (the revolutionary leadership guru);
- (17) **W.J. Reddin** (three dimensional leadership grid);
- (18) **R. Tannenbaum, W.H. Schmidt** (the leadership continuum); and
- (19) **Abraham Zaleznick** (leadership versus management).

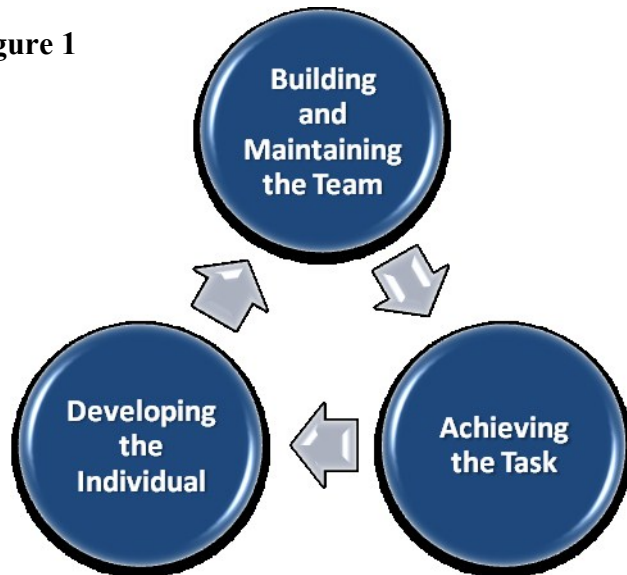
## **Lessons Learned from Sapient Pundits:**

Thomas identifies certain contributions made by the aforementioned leaders:

**John Adair – Action Centered Leadership (ACL):** John Adair became the world’s first Professor of Leadership Studies at the University of Surrey and is regularly cited as one of the world’s most influential contributors to leadership development and understanding. From his works, the reader can expect to learn about governance from a wide array of historical notables, including Napoleon, Lao Tzu, Alexander the Great, Lawrence of Arabia, Gandhi, and Charles de Gaulle.

Adair coined the “Action Centered Leadership” model which is represented by three interlocking circles:

Figure 1



1. Achieving the task;
2. Building and maintaining the team; and
3. Developing the individual.

Adair also addressed the generic physiological and psychological composite of a noted leader. This *whole person* composite is more commonly referred to as the “50/50 Rule:” 50% relates to that particular individual’s energies and innate motivation and 50% from exposure to environmental factors and influences.

**Warren Bennis – “The Dean of Leadership Gurus:”**

Warren Bennis was designated as “The Dean of Leadership Gurus” by *Forbes* magazine and is noting for stating that “Leaders are people who do the right things; managers are people who do things right.” In identifying such leaders, Bennis used noted American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, founder of “humanistic psychology,” as an example of one who fits the mold of a leadership guru as he was certainly “one of the Olympian minds of our time.”

**“Leaders are people who do the right things; managers are people who do things right.”**

**— Warren Bennis**

For Bennis, a leader is someone who is capable of creating an inspiring vision and functioning as an excellent communicator, aware of what challenges must be resolved. He or she must be comfortable with change, confusion, and constructive conflict. Such leader must be able to balance short and long-term plans and organizational expectations while representing a model for integrity. Bennis outlines four competencies that determine the success of a new leader:

1. The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation;
2. The new leader keeps reminding people of what is important;
3. The new leader sustains and generates trust; and
4. The new leader and the led are intimate allies.

**Robert Blake and Jane Mouton – The Grid People:** Robert Blake and Jane Mouton originally developed “The Managerial Grid” in 1962 as an organizational development model. The Grid contains five styles of leadership: *task master manager*, *country club manager*, *impoverished manager*, *dampened pendulum manager*, and *team manager*. The ***task master manager*** style is described as the very pushy and demanding leader – perhaps more accurately characterized as an autocrat. The ***country club manager*** refers to a leader who is more people-oriented and less task-oriented. The ***impoverished manager*** style describes the situation where managers or leaders attempt to avoid all decision-making and responsibility assumption. The ***dampened***

*pendulum manager* can best be described as the middle-of-the-road manager; someone who alternates between handling necessary tasks and duties while remaining in tune with co-workers' needs. Finally, the *team manager* describes the leader who effectively integrates people around task demands.

**Ken Blanchard – The One Minute Manager:** Dr. Ken Blanchard, a prominent author, speaker, and business consultant, is often described as one of the most insightful, powerful, and compassionate pundits in the business world. Blanchard's books are unashamedly simple and clear in both style and content. His classic *One Minute Manager*, co-authored with Spencer Johnson (who subsequently went on to write the equally famous and successful *Who Moved My Cheese?* which primarily focuses on change management) – epitomized his approach. The book attempts to strike a balance between the results-oriented manager and the people-oriented manager by establishing certain guidelines to help a working team become more individually responsible. These constitute:

1. The “One-Minute Goal” – which is designed to ensure that people understand perfectly what their duties are and what is expected of them;
2. The “One-Minute Praise” – which lets people know when they are doing the right thing or when they need to change their course of conduct; and
3. The “One-Minute Reprimand” – which should be delivered immediately upon revelation of the erroneous act. The act, not the individual, should be at the forefront of the discussion.

**David Brent – A Modern (Fictional) Leadership Icon:** David Brent, the invented white-collar, mid-level manager, portrayed in the BBC original version of the Americanized hit series, *The Office*, is included in the litany of leaders primarily to demonstrate the *unprincipled* manager who believes that his actions demonstrate quite the opposite characterization. As boss of the invented Slough branch of the Wernham-Hogg paper merchants, this type of “leader” unfortunately demonstrates many of the same characteristics of similarly-situated managers today. He is self-aggrandizing, paternalistic, and strives to be both mentor and friend to those who work under him when in “mockumentary reality” – uneasily reflecting similar working relationships in the real business world – he is out of touch with his workers who generally loathe him for his naiveté and offensiveness. Several of Brent's oft-quoted workplace slogans and parabolic-like stories include:

**“Quitters never win, winners never quit. But those who never win and never quit are idiots.”**

**“What does a squirrel do in the summer? It buries nuts. Why? Because then in wintertime, he's got something to eat and he won't die. So, collecting nuts in the summer is worthwhile work. Every task you do in work think, would a squirrel do that? Think squirrels, think nuts.”**

and

**“Remember the three golden rules: (1) It was like that when I got here; (2) I didn't do it; and (3) (To your Boss) I like your style.”**

**Peter Drucker – Management by Objectives:** By stark contrast, one of the world’s most respected business leaders, philosophers, and teachers, is highlighted by Thomas. Peter Drucker was born in Austria in 1909 and was probably the most renowned business and management guru in the modern world. His leadership values concentrated more on the nature of human relationships and how people interact both inside and out of the business world than the mere gathering and application of statistical information. Drucker, a self-described “social ecologist,” first mentions his famous concept of “Management by Objectives (MBO)” in his work, *The Concept of the Corporation*. MBOs constituted the key management term which soon became synonymous with Drucker. He fervently argued that all managers should be driven by objectives.

The author describes Drucker as somewhat assuming the leadership traits of Genghis Khan: “Of an officer I expect that he takes care of the men before he takes care of himself. Of a general I expect that he takes care of his horse before he takes care of his men.” The *Harvard Business Review* has described Drucker as the “father of modern management, social commentator, and pre-eminent business philosopher.”

Several of Drucker’s quotes summarily describe his style of leadership:

**“Leadership is not rank, privileges, title or money. It is responsibility.”**

and

**“There is no substitute for leadership. But management cannot create leaders. It can only create the conditions under which potential leadership qualities become effective; or it can stifle potential leadership.”**

**— Peter Drucker**

**Fred Fiedler – The Contingency Theory Man:** Fiedler’s “Contingency Theory” postulates that a leader’s effectiveness is premised upon the interaction of *leadership style* and *situational favourableness* (also known as situational control). This leadership style is measured by what Fiedler refers to as the *Least Preferred Co-Worker* (LPC) scale, which is essentially a survey used to measure an individual leader’s orientation. Both low-LPC (task-oriented) and high-LPC (relationship-oriented) individuals can be effective leaders. Three components determine the level of situational favorableness or control:

1. Leader-member relationships: the degree to which the employees accept the leader.
2. Task structure: the degree and level of detail to which subordinate roles and jobs are defined.
3. Position power: the amount of formal authority a leader possesses by virtue of his or her position in the organization.

Fiedler found that low-LPC leaders are more effective in extremely favourable or unfavourable situations, whereas high-LPC leaders perform best in situations which are relatively stable. His work advocates that:

- The favourableness of leadership situations should be assessed in determining leadership effectiveness.
- Candidates for leadership positions should be evaluated using the LPC scale.
- If a leader is being identified for a particular position, then a leader with an appropriate LPC profile should be chosen (*task-oriented* for very favourable or very unfavourable situations and *relationship-oriented* for a more stable environment).
- If a leadership situation is being chosen for a particular candidate, a situation (work team, department, etc.) should be chosen which matches his or her LPC profile.

**Daniel Goleman – The Emotional Intelligence (EQ – “Emotional Quotient”) Man:** Daniel Goleman’s, a noted scientific journalist, believes that true leaders must recognize the value of each worker which transcend objective, intellectual intelligence, but extends to include each individual’s emotional wealth. Goleman’s work cites five components which comprise emotional intelligence (EQ): self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy for others, and social skills. In order to comprehensively examine leadership roles and how EQ might influence leadership styles, Goleman has developed six possible approaches: visionary leadership, coaching leadership, affiliative leadership, democratic leadership, pace-setting leadership, and commanding leadership. By transcending conventional intelligence to include character elements, Goleman believes that managerial success can be better and more accurately predicted, determined and measured.

**Paul Hersey – Situational Leadership:** According to Paul Hersey, effective leaders adapt their styles to suit different situations. His model proposes four generic leadership styles in which he differentiates between directive and supporting strategies. They are telling, selling, participating, and delegating. With respect to the *telling* style, task-orientation is high while human relationships are minimal to allow the manager to closely control the work of his or her staff to act quickly to remediate low performance. A greater equality of emphasis on both person and task orientations characterizes the *selling* style. In this regard, the leader shows concern for both quality task performance while maintaining healthy and mutually rewarding staff relationships. In juxtaposition, the *participating* style places lower emphasis on task while advocating stronger staff relationships. The leader uses this style to encourage people to manage their own work. Lastly, the *delegating* style involves decreased attention to both task and staff relationships. The leader who uses this style effectively liberates or empowers people to define problems and develop solutions through their own efforts.

**Manfred Kets de Vries – The Psychology of Leadership:** Unlike many other leadership pundits, Swedish-born Kets e Vries probes deeper into the human psyche and explores the “darker side” of leadership, along with notions of the narcissistic personality and charisma. His leadership work has led him to explore in depth the leadership styles of many current and recent leadership icons including Richard Branson (Virgin), Percy Barnevik (formerly of engineering multinational conglomerate, Asea Brown Boveri (ABB)), Jack Welch (formerly of General Electric), Walt Disney, and Ernest Saunders (formerly of Guinness). Kets e Vries is quoted as saying that many leaders are hooked on the four “Ps,” namely Power, (the) Podium, Perks, and Praise. In citing some reasons for leadership incompetence, he cites:

1. The unwillingness to exercise authority – which may result in either the avoidance of conflict situations or the constant need to be liked.
2. The tyranny of subordinates as caused by an excessively abrasive set of behaviours.
3. Micro-management and the obsession with detail.
4. Overly political, game-playing.

His checklist of excellent leadership practices and characteristics includes the following:

- Provide vision;
- Are strong communicators;
- Create high levels of trust;
- Acquire emotional intelligence (EQ);
- Motivate and challenge people;
- Build teams;
- Provide constructive feedback;
- Modify one's own narcissistic needs to the benefit of the organization;
- Are persistent and decisive;
- Are good time managers; and
- Possess a sense of humour.

#### **John Kotter – The Leader and Change:**

**“Most organizations are over-managed and under led.”**

Harvard Business School professor John P. Kotter runs a close second to Warren Bennis's mantle as the world's foremost leadership guru. His research and writings focus upon change management from the leadership perspective. He identifies eight critical stages that leaders need to follow in order to achieve effective organizational transformation:

- establish a sense of urgency;
- form a powerful guiding coalition;
- create a vision;
- communicate that vision;
- empower others to act on the vision;
- plan for and create short-term wins;
- consolidate improvements; and
- keep the momentum for change moving and institutionalize the new approaches.

#### **James M. Kouzes and Barry Posner – Leadership and Followership:**

**“Leadership is in the eye of the follower.”**

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner are prolific researchers as well as award-winning writers and consultants in the fields of leadership and executive development. Posner is a renowned scholar who has published more than 80 research and practitioner-oriented articles in journals such as “The Academy of Management Journal,” “Journal of Applied Psychology,” and “Human



Relations and Personnel Psychology.” Both Kouzes and Posner are frequent conference speakers and have conducted leadership development programmes for hundreds of organizations.

Based upon 20 years of research, Kouzes and Posner have distilled five simple principles of effective leadership which they term as: (1) model the way; (2) inspire a shared vision; (3) challenge the process; (4) enable others to act; and (5) encourage the heart. For this pair of scholars, leadership is about thinking “outside of the box” and extending one’s perception of what is possible beyond the rational and scientific approach to business. Precisely, leadership is all about creating emotional connections with people.

#### **Nicolo Machiavelli – The Prince:**

**“Leadership is best for a leader to be loved but if they cannot be loved they must be feared.”**

Nicolo Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy at a time when the country was in political turmoil. Italy was divided into four dominant city-states and each was subject to intense foreign intervention. The political atmosphere of that time and place in history invariably affected Machiavelli’s dark sense of control and understanding of “leadership.” He overtly championed opportunism over morality. Several of his quotes convey these ideas:

**“A leader should know how to enter into evil when necessity commands.”**

**“It is necessary for a prince to have all the virtues, but necessary to appear to have them.”**

Unfortunately, the Machiavelli-esque type of leader remains ever present throughout the world today, providing myriad examples of how principled leaders should not act.

**Abraham Maslow – The Motivation Man:** American psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslow, was one of the original founders of human psychology and played a key role of helping leaders understand the concept of motivation. He established the well-known *hierarchy of needs* where humans strive to attain the next higher order of need once primary needs are met. This hierarchy is comprised of physiological needs, safety needs, the desire to belong and to be loved, self-esteem, advanced cognitive abilities, aesthetic pursuits, and self-actualization.

#### **Douglas McGregor - The Theory X and Theory Y Man:**

**“The motivation, the potential for development, the capacity for assuming responsibility...are all present in people. Management does not put them there.”**

McGregor coined the X and Y Theories where the prototypical Theory X person is inherently lazy and will avoid work wherever possible. Theory X persons must be driven, directed, coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment in order to get them to work as their organization requires. Theory X relates that the average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all else.

On the contrary, Theory Y refers to the ordinary person who does not dislike work; rather, the conditions of the nature of the work at hand may serve as a source of satisfaction or punishment. The average human being learns – under proper conditions – not only to accept, but also to seek responsibility.

**David McClelland – Achievement, Affiliation and Power Motivation:** In his book, *Human Motivation: Achievement Motivation, Power Motivation and Affiliation Motivation*, David McClelland describes several types of fundamental motivational needs, identifying power motivation as the most complex. McClelland details four specific types of power motivation:

- Stage one power is a desire for something or someone that is perceived as powerful and influential. For some people, this could be a job role such as Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive.
- Stage two power concerns the quest to feel in control while maintaining one's independence despite the circumstances. Managers who take full control and do not worry about challenges or threats from others are good examples.
- Stage three power motivation is the characteristic most closely associated with leadership and management. This individual is motivated by the act of directing or influencing other people.
- Stage four power reflects interdependence – a desire not to control or influence people directly but to simply to act as a conduit for liberating other people to assume greater things.

**Tom Peters – The Revolutionary Leadership Guru:** Warren Bennis once said, “If Peter Drucker invented modern management, Tom Peters vivified it.” It is the energy and radical fervour of Tom Peters that has set him apart from all other leadership scholars and examples.

*In Search of Excellence*, widely regarded as the classic business book of our time, is co-authored by Peters and Robert Waterman. The book explores the interworkings 43 well-known companies, including such notables as IBM, Hewlett Packard, and 3M. *In Search of Excellence* also highlights a particular measuring instrument referred to as the 7S Model. The 7S Model is primarily used to diagnose the various efforts of the companies explored, focusing on the so-called “hard” and “soft” aspects of management effort to supplement the already existing hard S's of strategy, structure, and systems-dominated management thinking. What Peters and Waterman accomplished was to elevate the importance of the soft S's of shared values, style of management, skills, and staff.

**W.J. Reddin – Three Dimensional Leadership Grid:** Professor Reddin is best known for the 3-D theory of management which focus on results-oriented management and output-oriented organizations, opining that individuals will work more effectively if they are given a clear purpose of duty and assist in defining that duty. Reddin further identifies eight types of leadership styles:

1. The Deserter — who has none or only a minimum of the leadership characteristics;
2. The Bureaucrat — who emphasizes effectiveness;
3. The Missionary — who narrows his or her focus to relationship-building;
4. The Developer — who develops and maintains both effectiveness and relationship orientations;
5. The Autocrat — who pursues task-oriented managerial styles;
6. The Benevolent Autocrat — who stresses effectiveness in leadership and is primarily focused on task orientations;
7. The Compromiser — who possesses both task and relationship orientations; and
8. The Manager (Executive) — who displays and balances a combination of leadership, task-oriented, and human-relationship qualities.

**Tannenbaum and Schmidt – The Leadership Continuum:** Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt argued that three factors have to be considered by any leader in order to be effective and respected: managerial forces, subordinate forces, and situational forces. In considering these various sources, certain enmeshed leadership behaviours are identified:

1. The manager decides and announces the decision.
2. The manager decides and then “sells” the decision to the group.
3. The manager presents the decision with background ideas and invites questions.
4. The manager suggests a provisional decision and invites discussion about it.
5. The manager presents the situation or problem, solicits suggestions, and then decides.
6. The manager explains the situation, defines the parameters, and asks the team to decide.
7. The manager allows the team to identify the problem, develop the options, and decide upon which action to take which must be within the manager’s articulated limitations.

**Abraham Zaleznik – Leadership Versus Management:**

**“Leadership is made of substance, humanity, and morality and we are painfully short of all three qualities in our collective lives.”**

With this profound articulation of deficiencies in contemporary leadership, Zaleznik differentiates between managers and leaders as his Harvard Business Review article “Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?” reveals.

According to Zaleznik, management is all about operating in a culture that “emphasizes rationality and control.” It is within this type of environment and organization where “it takes neither genius nor heroism to be a manager, but rather persistence, tough mindedness, hard work, intelligence, analytical ability and, perhaps most important, tolerance and goodwill.”

## Conclusion:

**“Leadership is the lifting of a man’s vision to higher sights, the raising of a man’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a man’s personality beyond its normal limitations.” – Peter Drucker**

In *Gurus on Leadership*, author Mark A. Thomas explores the many and varied leadership styles advocated or identified by noted individuals, from 16<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Nicolo Machiavelli to contemporary academic W.J. Reddin.

Interspersed with his description of various leadership styles, Thomas also discusses the setbacks experienced by Abraham Lincoln before he assumed the position as the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States as well as outlines the leadership attributes enunciated by John Gardener (e.g., physical vitality, intelligence, action-oriented judgment, eagerness to accept responsibility, task competence, understanding of followers’ needs, capacity to motivate people, courage and resolution, trustworthiness, self-confidence, and adaptability).

*Gurus on Leadership* is invaluable for the burgeoning entrepreneur and the seasoned veteran, as well as for the academician and student, to explore the various facets of leadership and the contributions proffered by leadership gurus.

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## Reviewer’s Biography

Professor M.S. Rao has 29 years of experience in leadership development. He is a trainer, teacher, writer, orator, mentor, researcher, consultant and practitioner who conducts training programs for various corporate and educational institutions.

Professor Rao is the chief consultant for MSR Leadership Consultants, India. He is the editor of *Soft Skills for Better Employability* and *Secrets for Successful Public Speaking*. His authored books titled *Secrets for Success* (foreword by Lenny Laskowski, international professional speaker and national best-selling author of *10 Days to More Confident Public Speaking*) and *Soft Skills – Enhancing Employability* (foreword by Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, one of the fifteen most influential management thinkers in the world and the author of *MOJO*) will be released shortly.

Professor Rao has published more than 150 articles to his credit published on various global websites; in periodicals including *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, and the *Deccan Chronicle*; and in magazines and journals including *Emerald* (UK), *Academic Leadership* (US) and *Career-Journal* (Germany). He is a member of the Emerald Literati Network, U.K. He is the editorial board member of the *International Journal of Professional Management* (IJPM), *Promota Magazine* (UK), and *Career-Journal.com* (Germany). He can be reached at: [profmsr7@gmail.com](mailto:profmsr7@gmail.com) and additionally maintains a popular blog titled *Where Knowledge is Wealth* – URL <http://profmsr.blogspot.com>.