

# LEADERSHIP

Essential Selections on Power, Authority, and Influence

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Executive Book Summary

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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Mandela

Image Source: <http://b-i.forbesimg.com/mfonobongnsehe/files/2013/12/Mandela.jpg>

## Executive Book Review of *Leadership*, Edited with Commentary by

### Barbra Kellerman

*on Power, Authority, and Influence (2010).*

Throughout history, the most persuasive and successful leaders have effectively used language and literature by excelling in their communication skills to lead nations towards a cause. A leader has the power to motivate people and change minds by presenting ideas in ways that are understood. A leader is never free from learning or educating others. The issues relating to leadership and the use of language through education are thoroughly explained in Barbra Kellerman's book, *Leadership: Essential Selections*

The book is divided into three different sections, with each section consisting of various passages of literature from infamous leaders throughout history. This executive book summary provides a look into the various sections of the book.

Part I focuses on the role of leaders in society and defines the term

“leadership” through examples.

Part II concentrates on literature as leadership and how the use of language and literature can bring about change. The final section of the book, Part III, provides infamous literature from the lives of notable figures in history such as Queen Elizabeth I, Abraham Lincoln, Lenin, Winston Churchill and several others. Part III describes how the aforementioned leaders utilized communication and persuasion to motivate their followers.

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## LAO TSU

“Doing nothing, achieves everything”

## CONFUCIUS

“I examine myself three times a day. When dealing on behalf of others, have I been trustworthy? In intercourse with my friends, have I been faithful? Have I practiced what I was taught?”

## PLATO

“Any student who is half-hearted in his studies – especially when he is young and lacks the understanding to judge between what is useful and what is not – cannot be called a philosopher or a lover of wisdom. He is like one who picks at his food. We say that he is not really hungry and has no appetite. We say that he is a poor eater and no lover of the table.”

## PLUTARCH

“I don't need a friend who changes when I change and who nods when I nod; my shadow does that much better.”

## PART I

### About Leadership: What is leadership? What defines a leader?

## PLATO



Image Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Sanzio\\_01\\_Plato\\_Aristotle.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Sanzio_01_Plato_Aristotle.jpg)

From the earliest records of

human existence, leadership has always been a topic of great interest and rumination.

Whether it was religious leadership, where a prophet leads a nation to salvation, or a philosopher defining life and leading curious minds to question the mere existence of human life on Earth. Some of the greatest philosophers and educators of history such as Aristotle, Plato, Confucius and Lao Tsu advised and sought out

to define and understand leadership.

### SKILLS REQUIRED FOR A LEADERSHIP ROLE

Kellerman focuses mostly on what a leader should learn. She believes that a leader can learn important skills including but not limited to:

- Communication skills
- Negotiating skills
- Decision making skills

Through literature from the past, Kellerman believes that a

leader can learn from the mistakes and guidance that predecessors have provided.

### USE OF LANGUAGE IN LEADERSHIP

Language has been used for generations to change minds and guide people towards an ideology. Language has the power to motivate nations. From the list of important skills that Kellerman provided, she expands on each point using examples from the past.

One of the oldest references she uses is Lao Tsu. In his translated piece “The Way and Its Powers” he explains how in some instances of leadership, doing nothing is sometimes the most powerful thing to do. Kellerman comments that this is an especially odd notion for Western societies. In the heart of his piece, Tao Tsu states that to do nothing, achieves everything. It’s an idea that scholars have spent years trying to understand but the main consensus has been that based on Tao Tsu’s teachings, leadership should not be used as a means to extort power upon others. By limiting the actions that a leader ordered

on his counterparts, this allowed time for the leader to self-reflect and for personal fulfillment. Lao Tsu believed that a leader should only ever lead in the gentlest manner, for a leader to lead “only by the lightest of hands, hands so light to the touch that they seem less real than imagined” (p. 8).

The second figure head that Kellerman explored through literature was Confucius. She described him as a political genius, one that has defied time and provided generations with guidance. “His mission was to teach an elite corps of leaders how to govern wisely and well” (p. 15). Confucius believed that education is paramount for a leader to lead effectively. He did not believe in the concept of leadership by lineage, but rather that leadership can be taught. **...Continued on page 4**

Do you think that leadership as a skill is effectively taught in the education system in Canada?

## CONFUCIUS



Image Source:  
<http://www.biography.com/imported/images/Biography/Images/Profiles/C/Confucius-9254926-2-402.jpg>

## TAO TSU



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3a/Lao\\_Tzu\\_-\\_Project\\_Gutenberg\\_eText\\_15250.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3a/Lao_Tzu_-_Project_Gutenberg_eText_15250.jpg)

Not only did Confucius believe that good leadership was what mattered most, but that the followership is good as well. Kellerman states, “the world of Confucius is one in which the Master gets what he needs and wants not by using force, but by employing a set of skills that today might be termed “social intelligence” (p. 16).

Plato was one of the greatest philosophers of his time. He was one of the few during his time that recognized that all humans harbor evil intentions. Plato believed that evil leadership is psychological in disposition. However, he also understood that every human has to make the choice on whether or not they will serve such unnecessary desires and pleasures. Plato warned against making judgments based on whim and desire and encouraged leaders in political positions to make decisions on the basis of right and wrong for a society and the followership. He states that those who make irrational decisions in the position of leadership will sooner or later fall into the position of tyranny

“Learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity.”  
- Machiavelli

and to Plato, a “tyrant can never be content” (p. 28).

Kellerman briefly comments on Plutarch’s “The Comparison of Dion and Brutus” in Part I. He is known as a great writer. In his piece, Plutarch compares two leaders. His work provides an example of an ancient form of leadership education. He taught leadership through his writings by exploring the lives of great men. Plutarch believed it was more important to be informed about men’s characters during the most crucial times (sieges and war).

From Tao Tsu, to Plato it is clear that using evil in leadership was not recommended. In contrast, Machiavelli believed that to educate a leader one must learn when and how to use evils for necessity. Machiavelli believed that there are situations where a leader must put aside morals

## PLUTARCH



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[http://classicalwisdom.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Plutarch\\_0.jpeg](http://classicalwisdom.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Plutarch_0.jpeg)

## MACHIAVELLI



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e2/Portrait\\_of\\_Niccolò\\_Machiavelli\\_by\\_Santi\\_di\\_Tito.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e2/Portrait_of_Niccolò_Machiavelli_by_Santi_di_Tito.jpg)



## MACHIAVELLI

“Politics have no relation to morals.”

## THOMAS HOBBS

“Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry... no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

## JOHN LOCKE

“An excellent man, like precious metal, is in every way invariable; A villain, like the beams of a balance, is always varying, upwards and downwards.”

## LEO TOLSTOY

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

and goodwill to do what might be required such as inflicting harm upon others. As such, Machiavelli encouraged leaders to learn when it is right to exert force on followership. This allows the leader to be feared and to Machiavelli fear is the epitome of power and leadership.

From Machiavelli, Kellerman turns the focus to Hobbes and John Locke. She writes that they both are to be compared in that Hobbes focused more on natural human rights and Locke focused on natural law to include the rights of liberty and property. Both Locke and Hobbes examined the rights of the followership rather than the skillsets of a leader.

The next few sections of the book summed up several different writers including Thomas Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, William James, and Leo Tolstoy. Kellerman explains that each of the writers asked the question “does the man (or woman) make history, or does history make the man? (p. 56)

For the remaining sections in Part I, the following list

describes briefly the main discussion points that Kellerman focused on:

- John Stuart Mill: Encouraged leaders to allow their followers to have basic human rights, individual human rights. He discouraged tyranny and oppressing the followership. He believed that leadership could be taught in such a way that a leader learns to respect the followership.

- Max Weber: Believed in charismatic leaders having a huge impact on followership, since charismatic leaders have the ability to be loved by the followership.

- Sigmund Freud: Explored the psychological aspect of leaders and how understanding the human mind can allow a leader to have greater impact on the followership.

- Mary Parker Follett & James McGregor Burns: Follett and Burns encouraged the contemporary study of power, authority and influence in a business setting (but can be applied to an educational setting). Burns introduced two

different leadership types, transactional and transformative leadership. Both Burns and Follett believed that leadership is all encompassing. To Burns and Follett, leaders should be inclusive and include the followership, with advice and guidance, to move towards change and to better their situations.

- Stanley Milgram: Leaders have the power to be obeyed. However, Milgram warned that this sort of power could be easily abused. He saw the relationship between leadership and followership as an exchange between two people, one who leads and directs and one who follows. Milgram explained that leadership is as such: one has power and authority (the leader), and one follows and has no control or power.

- Hannah Arendt: Her focus was Nazi Germany and trying to find what went wrong with the leader versus followership relationship. Arendt came to the same conclusion as Milgram, as Kellerman explains, that leaders have the authority and followers do as they're told – which in

Think of what being a leader means to you. Would you rule with an iron fist as Machiavelli encouraged, or with kindness as Confucius explained?

essence is what happened in Nazi Germany according to Milgram and Arendt.

To conclude the first part of her book, Kellerman explains that leadership cannot be truly defined. It encompasses so much and only through learning from the past leaders, writers, educators, philosophers, and tyrants can one start to learn what leadership is about. What is clear, as Kellerman states, is that there is an existence of a relationship between leadership and followership, one that must be understood and boundaries respected. To Kellerman, a leader must learn how to lead; a leader must learn through literature when it is right and wrong to use force and how a leader should motivate nations.

FOLLETT



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/88/Mary\\_Parker\\_Follett\\_\(1868-1933\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/88/Mary_Parker_Follett_(1868-1933).jpg)

TOLSTOY

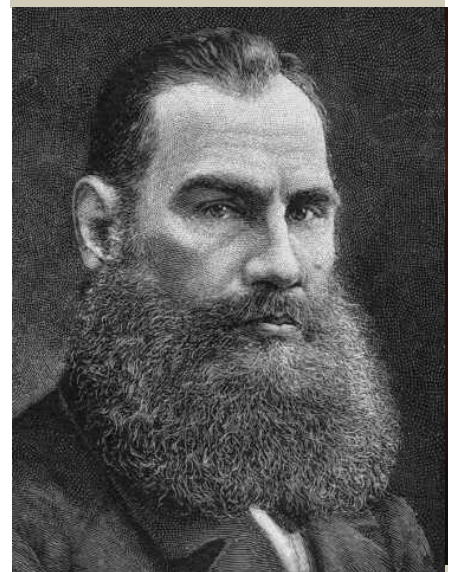


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## PART II

### When the Pen is Greater than the Sword: Changing the World with Words

In the second section of her book, Kellerman comments that the “pen” has the power to be mightier than the sword. This means that words have the power of changing nations more so than war or terror does. In this section (Part II), Kellerman goes through the works of eight men and four women – all of whom wrote to make a difference.

Some were revolutionaries; some merely voiced their opinions and campaigned for a difference through their writings. Kellerman stresses that all of the writers are indeed leaders. “They wrote so well that that we read them still. And they wrote so well that their literature was leadership” (p. 118).



“Perhaps the seeds of false-refinement, immorality, and vanity, have ever been shed by the great. Weak, artificial beings, raised above the common wants and defections of their race, in a premature and unnatural manner, undermine the very foundation of virtue, and spread corruption through the whole mass of society!”

-Wollstonecraft

Image Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/Marywollstonecraft.jpg>

Mary Wollstonecraft is the first figure that Kellerman comments on her book *Leadership*. Wollstonecraft was a pioneer of women’s rights. She wrote of women’s independence from men and how women should educate themselves so that they can lead a life on their own

separate from the dependence on men. Not only did Wollstonecraft defy all perceptions of women during her time, she wrote with such eloquence and bravery. Her work “A Vindication of the Rights of Women” is considered



## PAINE



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Thomas\\_Paine\\_rev1.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Thomas_Paine_rev1.jpg)

## STANTON



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/Elizabeth\\_Stanton.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/Elizabeth_Stanton.jpg)

to be one of the greatest pieces of feminism in history.

To Kellerman, Thomas Paine was another of the historical figures whose writing is exceptional and should be looked into for its leadership qualities. Paine fought for the independence of America from the Crown. Through his work “Common Sense” he made his case through writing as fighting with the Crown at that time would just result in imprisonment. Paine used rhetoric in his work to bring about his points. His works were revolutionary and he was a leader with his language (p. 132).

The following list outlines the main points Kellerman brought up for each notable figure:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton: She fought for women’s right. Like Wollstonecraft, Stanton demanded women’s equality. She saw the unfair division in society between the status of men and that of women. Stanton encouraged the women of her time to fight for their rights, especially that of divorce and remarriage.

- Karl Marx: For Marx’s “The Communist Manifesto” Kellerman questioned where the actual literature ends and politics begins. She argues that the power of the piece may truly manifest from Marx’s use of language rather than the political content (p. 146).

- W.E.B. Du Bois: The first African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard University. Du Bois encouraged other men from his race to become educated so that they may be in a position to lead. He believed that equality can only be achieved by seeking education and having rational discourse with those from other races.

- Frantz Fanon: Known for applying “psychiatry to his politics” (p. 157).

- Rachel Carson: Kellerman explains that Carson’s book

Leadership through writing is powerful medium. Can you think of any modern day leaders who have focused on changing through language?



“Silent Spring” is in itself an act of leadership. How so? She explains that the work acted as a medium for bringing awareness to the dangers of using pesticides in farming).

Kellerman states that power of literature is that it can be used to change minds of nations, just as Carson did. She mixed both science and literature to create a piece that would cause notable decision makers in society to change their ways and view processes differently.

- Betty Friedan: Wrote about how postwar America took the ideal of femininity to “absurd extremes” (p. 171).

-Saul Alinsky: Father of community organization. Believed and wrote about the power of the people and the power of community.

- Peter Singer: Fought for the cause of animal rights and the liberation of animals from abuse. His book “Animal Liberation” is considered to be the bible for animal rights activists.

- Larry Kramer: Wrote about AIDS and the dangers the illness brings. He spoke openly about

“The function of the university is not simply to teach breadwinning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a center of polite society; if is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment from which forms the secret of civilization.”

- Du Bois

being Gay and battled with straight people regarding their hostility towards homosexuals. Kramer spoke up when no one else would, and he protested through writing (p. 200).

In closing for Part II, it is important to understand the power that words have, the power of language and the power of writing. Kellerman strongly believes that writing in itself is a form of leadership. To Kellerman, the pen is indeed far more powerful than the sword.

## DU BOIS



Image Source:  
<http://modernservantleader.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/w.e.b.dubois-servant-leader-w250x357.jpg>

## CARSON



Image Source:  
[http://www.notablebiographies.com/images/uewb\\_03\\_img0150.jpg](http://www.notablebiographies.com/images/uewb_03_img0150.jpg)

## PART III

### Leadership in Action: When Power Becomes Immortal

In the final section of Leadership, Kellerman provides speeches from notable figures in history such as Queen Elizabeth I, Abraham Lincoln, Lenin, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, and Gandhi.

- Queen Elizabeth I: One of the most memorable speeches ever given by Queen Elizabeth I was the address before the battle at Tilbury. She showed her leadership through his guidance and proving to the men whom she lead that she feared not being a supposed feeble woman as she claimed to have the heart and the stomach of the

equivalent King of England (p. 213).

- Abraham Lincoln: Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" is an exemplar of the leadership literature and the powerful use of leadership through language (p. 223).

- V.I. Lenin: Known throughout history as one of the greatest of all revolutionary leaders (p. 224). Kellerman explains that by definition "revolutions start when those at the bottom make a move against those at the top" (p. 230). But in reality, as Kellerman states, revolutions occur because of those in leadership positions. Lenin's

pamphlet "What is to Be Done?" was a personal statement to the Russian Marxists on what they need to do and how they are to do them. Lenin states in his piece: "There can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory" (p. 231). Lenin believed in educating and cultivating education for leadership.

- Mahatma Gandhi: Sought out to bring change to Indian society. He was a true leader through his writings, spoken word, and actions.

- Winston Churchill: A clever man and leader. Churchill was able to foresight, to an extent,



Source:  
<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/barbara-kellerman>

## ABOUT BARBRA KELLERMAN

"Kellerman received her B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College, and her M.A. (in Russian and East European Studies), M.Phil., and Ph.D. (1975, in Political Science) degrees from Yale University. She was awarded a Danforth Fellowship and three Fulbright fellowships. At Uppsala (1996-97), she held the Fulbright Chair in American Studies.

Kellerman was cofounder of the International Leadership Association (ILA), and is author and editor of many books. [...] She has appeared often on media outlets such as CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, NPR, Reuters and BBC, and has contributed articles and reviews to the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Harvard Business Review*."

## CHURCHILL



Image Source:  
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/35/Churchill\\_portrait\\_NYP\\_45063.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/35/Churchill_portrait_NYP_45063.jpg)

## KING JR.



Image Source:  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king.jpg](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king.jpg)

the future of Europe with his “exceptional knowledge and comprehension of Europe, [and] of the history and character of many of its nations” (p. 252). Churchill is a great example of how education and understanding can empower a leader. He brought an end to the war in Europe (WWII).

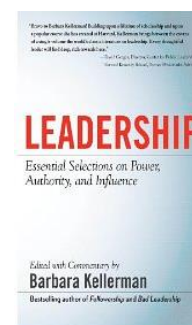
- Martin Luther King, JR.: Known mostly for his famous speech “I Have a Dream.” However, Kellerman focuses on his work titled “Letter.” The “Letter,” as Kellerman states, “is evidence that, notwithstanding the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.’s reputation as a man of moderation, this was a leader who was dedicated to something that was more akin to revolution than to evolution” (p. 264). In the “Letter,” King was addressing particular members of white clergy as a challenge. He wanted them to know he was challenging their gradualism.

- Nelson Mandela: Nelson has become a symbol of “survival against all odds, of the oppressed taking on the oppressor, of conciliation in the wake of conflict, of personal

peace in place of political vengeance” (p. 264). Mandela strongly believed that education had the power to change the world. Kellerman states that Mandela constantly fought using both actions and words to make a difference.

- Vaclav Havel: A freedom fighter in Czechoslovakia. Kellerman used Havel in her closing paragraph of the book because she believed that he is a great example of a leader who was both an intellectual leader and a political leader (p. 283).

“What, in this day and age, is the mark of a good education?” – Kellerman  
 Could we better incorporate leadership into modern day education?



Kellerman, B.  
 (2010). *Leadership: Essential Selections on Power, Authority, and Influence*. United States of America: The McGraw Hill Companies.