



# weLEAD Book Review

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## True North

*Discover Your Authentic Leadership*

Jossey-Bass - 2006 (288 pages in hardback)

Author **Bill George with Peter Sims**

ISBN 0787987514

Former CEO and Harvard Business School professor Bill George has a powerful message. Ethics *really* matter and strong unshakable values are the key to personal and organizational growth. True North is an enlightening work that covers the “who, what, why, when and where” of authentic leadership. Edited by Warren Bennis, and providing a foreword by political consultant David Gergen, it immediately grabs your attention. To produce this book George and Sims interviewed 125 current leaders in various fields and organizations. The examination of these influential executives show that their leadership is grounded in their *character* and unlike what the modern media portrays, it is usually the most effective you can find anywhere.

Woven deeply into the comments and quotations from the interviews is a practical and engaging commentary on ethics. The *heart* of the book is intended to inspire the reader to become the best leader they can possibly be by modeling quality standards that grow, care and serve others. It is based on the *importance* of long-term investment and growth rather than short-term personal gain. George believes that great organizations don't have only one or two charismatic leaders, but have hundreds of leaders in a variety of roles and positions. Chapter 2 is especially sobering as it discusses “Why Leaders Lose Their Way.” This excellent chapter outlines the *many* reasons leaders lose sight of their *true north* and become derailed. Sadly, thousands of religious, political and business leaders routinely fall into this category.

True North is composed of eleven interesting chapters and the later part is richly seasoned with helpful graphics, personal exercises, development plans and appendix. Some of the leaders interviewed are well known like Howard Schultz (Starbucks, C.E.O) and Charles Schwab (The Charles Schwab Corporation, Chairman and C.E.O.). However, most interviewees are lesser known influential leaders who offer some outstanding insight into their attitudes and ideas.

Why should you read True North? In the March 2007 **PBS** television show entitled “Now” Bill George was interviewed by the show's host David Brancaccio. When he was asked if he felt “well-adjusted grownups” should lead organizations, George replied: “Leaders *first* of all have to develop *themselves* and all the leaders I've seen who have failed, have failed to lead themselves. It's not that they can't lead other people, they aren't well grounded.”

True North will help you to understand why being grounded in the right values is essential for your long-term success and that of any business! I wholeheartedly recommend it for your *personal* library!

**weLEAD Rating – highly recommended**

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