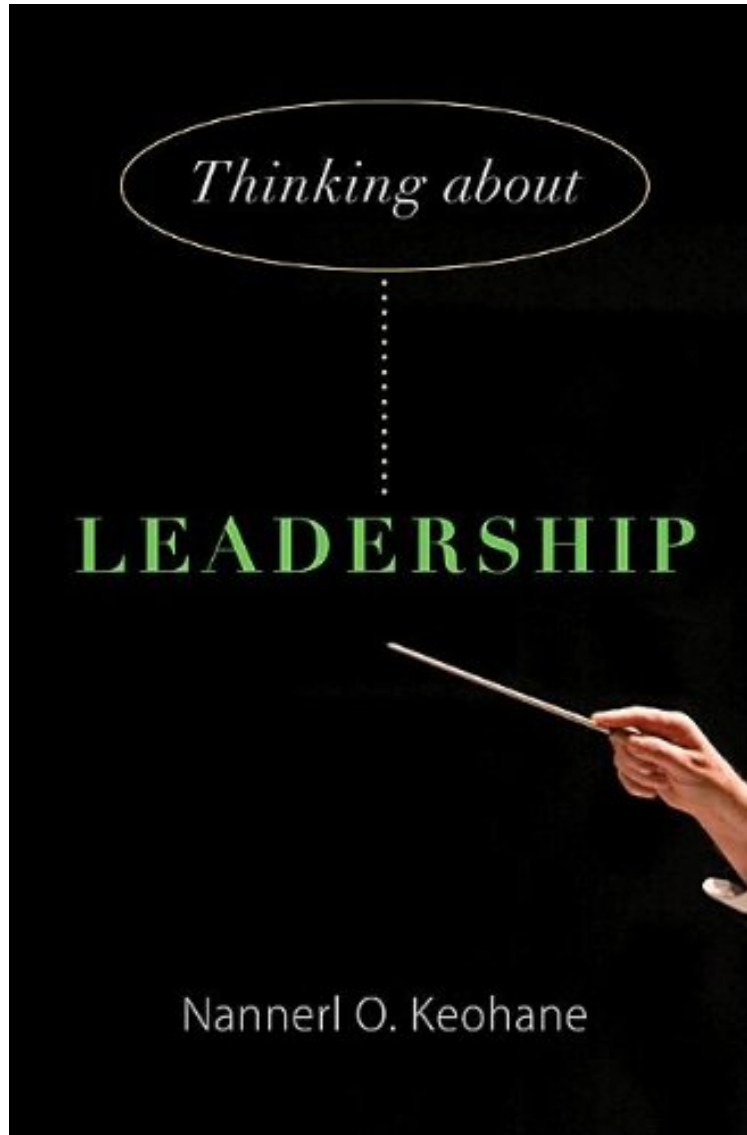


Thinking about Leadership

Nannerl O. Keohane

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Nannerl O. Keohane : Thinking about Leadership before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thinking about Leadership:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy David YiAs described and shipped in a timely manner.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. You can find these "insights" in pretty much any book that speaks to the broad topic ...By CustomerSame-o, same-o. You can find these "insights" in pretty much any book that speaks to the broad topic of leadership. Nothing particularly about the book that makes it exceptional.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. From Machiavelli to Mandela -- a great bookBy Wanda B. RedAs Nannerl Keohane explains modestly, the purpose of her book on "leadership" is "to clear away some of the underbrush that

prevents us from seeing clearly" what we mean by the term. She accomplishes this and much more by asking fundamental questions -- for example about what distinguishes leaders from followers, how leadership works in a democracy, whether men and women lead differently, whether power really does corrupt absolutely and universally. She draws her examples from philosophers and literary authors, from the monumental rulers of the past to the maneuvering politicians of the present (or should it be the reverse?). Thinkers from Aristotle to Wittgenstein, literary writers from William Shakespeare to William Golding provide the backdrop. And she seems effortlessly always to have the perfect example to hand, just as her simple but elegant prose is exactly tuned to her topic and her audience (which could and should be any thoughtful person). She provides not so much answers as further and more probing, provocative questions, leaving the reader with genuine ideas that engage thought. Her "conclusions" (if they can be called that) are surprisingly undogmatic: paradoxes do not have to be resolved; not every powerful leader IS corrupted by his role; gender may not make as much difference as culture. Indeed, the book is refreshing in many ways -- both for its method (nothing could be further from the leaden "case studies," surveys, diagrams, and other forms of "management" research that adorn the syllabi of business schools) and for its openness to new thinking about a very old topic. "Thinking about Leadership" is not a "how-to" book for leaders, but a meditation for all of us, all members of a species that requires some to step forward in order to get things done for the benefit of others. The price paid by those who enjoy power requires understanding by the rest of us, especially in a world whose political composition is changing so rapidly. Despite its deep learning and wide historical range, this book could not be more timely.

Leadership is essential to collective human endeavor, from setting and accomplishing goals for a neighborhood block association, to running a Fortune 500 company, to mobilizing the energies of a nation. Political philosophers have focused largely on how to prevent leaders from abusing their power, yet little attention has been paid to what it actually feels like to hold power, how leaders go about their work, and how they relate to the people they lead. In *Thinking about Leadership*, Nannerl Keohane draws on her experience as the first woman president of Duke University and former president of Wellesley College, as well as her expertise as a leading political theorist, to deepen our understanding of what leaders do, how and why they do it, and the pitfalls and challenges they face. Keohane engages readers in a series of questions that shed light on every facet of leadership. She considers the traits that make a good leader, including sound judgment, decisiveness, integrity, social skill, and intelligence; the role that gender plays in one's ability to attain and wield power; ethics and morality; the complex relationship between leaders and their followers; and the unique challenges of democratic leadership. Rich with lessons and insights from leaders and political thinkers down through the ages, including Aristotle, Queen Elizabeth I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Nelson Mandela, *Thinking about Leadership* is a must-read for current and future leaders, and for anyone concerned about our prospects for good governance.

Books about management usually leave me cold. . . . *Thinking about Leadership* by Nannerl Keohane is better than many I've dipped into. It's sensible, and short, and captures two aspects of leadership that seem pretty fundamental. The first is its definition of leadership. . . . The second is her emphasis on the importance of judgment. From the Back Cover "Nan Keohane breaks down leadership to the fundamentals--a combination of innate ability and acquired skills that helps motivate others to work toward a common goal. This book is about inspired leadership--and inspiring 'followership'--and should be required reading from the classroom to the boardroom."--John Mack, chairman of the board, Morgan Stanley "Nan Keohane's book is well-titled. Its focus is on thinking about leadership--exploring its many facets, complexities, and conundrums. It is not a 'how-to-do-it' book, but rather a sophisticated amalgam of the reflections of an author who is both a political philosopher and an experienced leader. Readers will enjoy--as well as learn from--the many references to the experiences of well-known leaders such as Mandela and Lincoln as well as to the voluminous literature on leadership."--William G. Bowen, president emeritus of Princeton University and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation "Drawing on her impressive skills as a leader and political theorist, Nan Keohane has made a major contribution to the study of leadership. This book is both thoughtful and wonderfully readable. The chapter on gender, alone, is worth the price of admission!"--Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Harvard University, author of *The Powers to Lead* "A wonderfully thoughtful meditation on what it means to lead, and to follow, by a noted political philosopher who knows the boardroom as well as she knows the seminar room. This study of leadership stands out for its clarity, candor, depth, and humanity. A must-read for anyone--leader or follower--confronting the manifold opportunities and dilemmas of power."--Josiah Ober, Stanford University "Nan Keohane is both an insightful political theorist and an experienced leader who is uniquely suited to thinking about leadership. This refreshing and richly textured discussion raises fundamental questions--why we need leaders, how leaders differ from followers, what is good leadership for democracies--and provides strikingly original observations in response."--Ruth Grant, Duke University "Thinking about Leadership is replete with important, telling, and original insights and information. The book addresses key questions about leadership that, while not necessarily new, need to be posed, over and over again. Nannerl Keohane does not know how to write a bad sentence or make an uninteresting point."--Barbara Kellerman,

author of *Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters* "Thinking about Leadership is one of the best books on leadership I have ever read. If more people--especially leaders and would-be leaders--were to read it, it would broaden their assumptions about what they could and should do. Keohane draws upon impressive, high-level personal experience as a leader. Her reputation as a scholar is equally and deservedly superb."--Joanne Martin, Fred H. Merrill Professor, emerita, Stanford University About the Author Nannerl O. Keohane is the Laurance S. Rockefeller Distinguished Visiting Professor of Public Affairs and the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University and former president of Wellesley College and Duke University. She is the author of "Higher Ground: Ethics and Leadership in the Modern University" and "Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment" (Princeton).