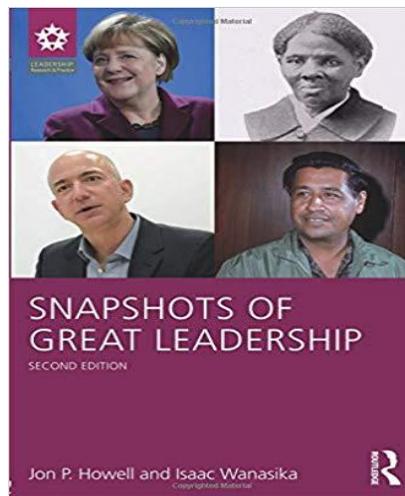


## Book Review

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**Title of Book:** *Snapshots of Great Leadership (2nd Edition)*

**Author:** Jon P. Howell & Isaac Wanasika

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**Number of pages:** 299 pages, Paperback

Snapshots of Great Leadership (2nd edition) is Dr. Jon P. Howell's effort to share his expertise from a successful career researching the topic of leadership. For the 2nd edition, he has added a co-author, Dr. Isaac Wanasika who adds value and a fresh perspective to a long list of chapters dedicated to exploring current and historic leaders within a research-oriented framework. The diverse cast of leaders in Snapshots are likely to include many individuals not known in detail to the average reader making it a valuable text for students of leadership and leadership instructors as well.

Chapter 1 is the foundation for the contribution of the book. Chapter 1, the lengthiest chapter at thirty pages, explicates the most popular and prevalent leadership perspectives from the scientific literature. The chapter starts by describing the complexities of leadership as a topic as well as offering a working definition of leadership. Earlier trait, behavior and contingency theories are outlined thoroughly and sensibly. Advancements to these foundational theories are presented next including summaries of Path-Goal Theory, the Multiple Linkage Model and Charismatic Theories. Additional research on well-published

behavioral theories is analyzed (e.g., Normative Decision, Leader-Member Exchange, Implicit Leadership Theory) as well as a quality synopsis of the Substitutes for Leadership perspective. Ethical perspectives on leadership are highlighted next including descriptions of Servant Leadership and Principle-Centered Leadership. New to Chapter 1 is a final section encompassing ‘Emergent Leadership Perspectives’. Here, contemporary research on topics such as Complexity Leadership and Collective Leadership Theories are detailed. Also, research on leadership and culture is explored in this new section along with a constructive description of toxic leadership and how it diverges from other behavioral theories of leadership.

Chapter 1 is followed by thirty-eight chapters dedicated to describing the characteristics, personal background, actions and surrounding events of a variety of ‘great’ leaders (30 chapters); ‘bad’ leaders (6 chapters); and uncategorized (good or bad?) leaders (2 chapters). The chapters are concise at around six pages single-spaced yet are quite descriptive of the life and times of each leader and often contain interesting facts that escape the popular press, or were forgotten. The book concludes with an interesting section supporting the notion that although the concept is often romanticized, leadership matters.

The true contribution of Snapshots as an effective classroom text (or supplement text) occurs at the end of each chapter. Here, the authors offer effective explanations regarding the scientific theories and perspectives that best describe each leader’s story. For example, the end of the chapter on Abraham Lincoln the authors note how, “Lincoln demonstrated Leader-Member Exchange Theory by developing an in-group of trusted advisors composed of several members of his cabinet. These men became fiercely loyal to Lincoln despite having been his rivals during his first presidential election.” Students of leadership will certainly benefit from these summaries as they provide helpful and understandable linkages between theory (described in Chapter 1) and the actions and decisions of an assortment of leaders.

The second edition of Snapshots adds eight new chapters and several key figures not present in the first edition. These new chapters include ‘great’ leaders such as Harriet Tubman – anti-slavery activist; Elizabeth Peratrovich – Native Alaskan civil rights activist; social entrepreneur Blake Mycoskie of Toms Shoes fame; Jeff Bezos – CEO of Amazon; Amancio Ortega – European fashion entrepreneur; Howard Schulz – former CEO of Starbucks and possible Presidential candidate; and finally Angela Merkel – Chancellor of Germany. Browsing the second edition table of contents, I was excited to read about these dynamic new characters and add their stories to classroom leadership discussions. For students reading the text, the variety of leadership examples, both current and historical is fun to read but will also help clarify many of the complexities of

leadership as a topic of scientific study. Taken as a whole, the text will further highlight the significance of the contingency aspect of leadership – which is often evident to most people but difficult to codify as well as Snapshots does.

Two former presidents have been omitted from the ‘great’ list in the second edition – George Washington (USA) and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Brazil). Sepp Blatter, deposed president of the international soccer organization FIFA, and Bernie Ebbers, disgraced former WorldCom CEO are two additions to the section summarizing examples of ‘bad’ leadership. Sorely, there are plenty of opportunities to add ‘Snapshots’ of additional ‘bad’ leaders to this section in future editions. Further, addressing the issue of influence and control is challenging for any leadership text. Many of the leaders in Snapshots were or are in high-level positions of power within established organizations. Separating distinct, yet overlapping, factors of influence is always challenging when describing leadership. These challenges include addressing the differences between leadership and the concepts of power, authority, hierarchy, status and other social control mechanisms which can complicate conceptual clarity for younger readers. Addressing these topics could benefit future editions of Snapshots.

Some readers may disagree with the ‘great’ label given to various leaders in Snapshots. This has been partially addressed by adding a new section to Snapshots that straddles both the good and bad decision making encompassing so many leaders. The last two chapters of the second edition of Snapshots make up an entirely new section titled, “Part IV: Snapshots of Great or Bad Leadership – You Decide”. These new chapters focus on Aung San Suu Kyi – Myanmar political leader, dissident and activist and Travis Kalanick – former CEO of Uber, the ride sharing service firm. This new section demonstrates the need to examine both the good and bad outcomes that often affect various individuals and stakeholder groups enveloped by those with organizational power and authority. This section is a welcome addition and I believe it will continue to grow as some readers may already believe a couple of ‘great’ leaders outlined in the text may also belong in this new section (e.g., Napoleon Bonaparte?), thus leaving any concluding adjectives up to the reader.

Overall, the 2nd edition of Snapshots of Great Leadership does quite an impressive job explaining complicated leadership and management perspectives in an understandable way for students of any age...and it is also a great read and resource for experienced leadership scholars and educators as well.

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