

Werner Erhard and Warren Bennis Discuss Compassion and Leadership

Warren Bennis

I want people, you see, I, I, when I understand something a little bit, I want everybody to understand it my way. I want people to see that complexity in you, that you are demanding, see, and yet the compassion and support is also there, too. And sometimes explanations are an excuse, and I don't know how you get across that without opening yourself up...see, what I was feeling inside was I don't want you to get opened up to that bullshit criticism that I have very little patience for.

Werner Erhard

Well, and that goes along with this other thing, Warren, because compassion, true compassion, if it doesn't leave you ruthless, isn't true.....if compassion doesn't leave you ruthless, it isn't true compassion.

If you aren't ruthless about inauthenticity, if you aren't ruthless about triviality, if you aren't ruthless about rigidity, if you aren't ruthless about a lack of openness, if you aren't ruthless about dishonesty, then truly you have no compassion.

Because for me, compassion is to see the dignity and the magnificence of other human beings, not merely their plight.

And this nonsense that compassion is somehow to see the plight of other people is to me to belittle other people and to therefore lack compassion. Real compassion is, in my view, true compassion is to see the dignity, the magnanimity, the power, the strength of people.

And...in large measure, compassion and leadership are synonymous, where compassion is this grasping of people as magnificent, where one is left with a certain ruthlessness about nonsense and...done...with the awareness of the scope and size of one's clout in contrast to the clout of the one with whom one is interacting. I just don't want to leave that part of it out, because I know if I'm the boss that my voice is louder. And it's not inauthentic for me to speak a little softly when I'm speaking with other people to even up the score.

But to treat the other person like the other person is somehow inferior and therefore I have to reduce myself in order to make things equal, that to me is an ultimate insult to the other person.