Bad Leadership by Barbara Kellerman
Book review by Jack Bickel

This book looks at the dark side of leadership. The author shows that there are three components to every leadership situation: the leader, the followers and the “web” - the context plus the relationships that the participants create.

Why do leaders behave badly? Traits and/or character

▪ **Two kinds of bad leadership:** ineffective (fails to produce results) and unethical (fails to distinguish between right and wrong; puts own desires ahead of followers needs)

▪ **Ethical leadership:** followers’ needs ahead of own needs; has private virtues of courage and temperance; seeks the common good.

Bad leadership types:

▪ **Incompetent**- lacks skill or will

▪ **Rigid**- stiff, unyielding, not adaptable

▪ **Intemperate**- lack self-control

▪ **Callous**- uncaring, unkind, mean, nasty

▪ **Corrupt**- lies, cheats, steals for self-interest

▪ **Insular**- disregards needs of those outside the group

▪ **Evil**- commits atrocities, uses pain, harms others

The author share brief examples of leaders in each “type” and presents an in-depth case study for each.

**Conclusion:** Leaders and followers co-create and co-constitute “leadership.” Both share responsibility for the good and bad done by leadership.

**Self-help for leaders:**

▪ Limit your tenure

▪ Share power

▪ Don’t believe your own hype

▪ Get real, stay real

▪ Compensate for your weaknesses

▪ Stay balanced

▪ Remember the mission

▪ Stay healthy

▪ Develop a personal support system

▪ Be creative

▪ Know and control your appetites

▪ Be reflective

**Self help for followers:**

▪ Empower yourself

▪ Be loyal to the whole, not to any one individual

▪ Be skeptical

▪ Take a stand

▪ Pay attention

▪ Take collective action

▪ Be a watchdog

▪ Hold leaders to account