

Michael H. Shenkman, Ph.D.

independently to take up that call.

He or she forms a completely new relationship, one that was never conceived in advance. A follower decides to create this relationship for the sole reason that just maybe something really exciting and worthwhile will happen along the way.

!!! ATM: What are the possible benefits of great, innovative leadership for Albuquerque?

With leaders throughout the community it can be a productive, creative, vibrant center where people of all ages, and especially younger people, create opportunities to put something special into the world. A city that has leaders grows, sparks innovations. It becomes a center for new things happening in the world.

!!! ATM: This topic is everywhere you look now.

There are more than 10,000 titles out there that refer to leaders. They all sell. What does that tell you?

People feel a lot of pain about the whole aspect of leading in their lives. They ask themselves, are these national office holders what I expect as leaders? Have I ever been led? Has a leader ever offered to mentor me? Should I be leading? These are important personal questions, not academic issues.

!!! ATM: The book is doing well. Why?

People are interested in my approach because I talk about what kind of a life people can expect to have when they step into the role of leading. The kind of learning they will have to take on and what they will have to give to others to be effective as leaders.

My book is a kind of surrogate mentor. In a way, it points to needing a mentor and what to expect or demand from that relationship. It's not an easy book, but for those who live with it for a while, I think they find it to be a worthy companion.

—by Gene Grant

Photograph by Don James/ATM

Michael H. Shenkman, Ph.D is the author of, *The Arch and the Path; The Life of Leading Greatly*, the culmination of two decades of cultivating the next generation of creative leaders.

Shenkman, who lives in the Northeast Heights, spearheads the "Accelerator Program" for Albuquerque's NextGen, who will be graduating its second class this month. Shenkman sat down with Albuquerque The Magazine to discuss leadership, and why his book is resonating in places as far flung as Silicon Valley and Boston.

!!! ATM: Define "leading."

Leading is a relationship with others in which everyone is striving to put more into their lives, in the way of a challenge, and giving more to others through the relevance and reach of their own efforts. Not just to do more work, but add some kind of quality to the work such that everyone would raise their level of engagement.

!!! ATM: Why so much focus on the mentor role in the book?

No mentors, no leaders—period. A mentor exemplifies what the life of leading entails, the life a leader really lives, the kinds of experiences and decisions leaders really need to make. There is no substitute for a mentor

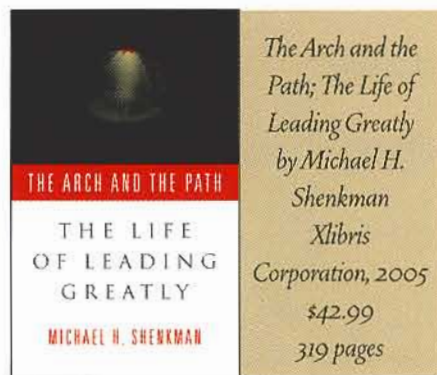
—not a business school, not being a "natural," certainly not being thrust into the role.

!!! ATM: Can anyone lead?

No. Just as anyone cannot become a concert pianist. Leading is a calling, just as is any life-shaping role. Someone is a leader who wants to offer wider and more encompassing possibilities to people by creating followers and forming an organization to accomplish their goals. Now tell me, does everyone want to do that? Leaders do. Most people don't.

!!! ATM: Can followers be developed?

Followers are "created" when leaders offer people a specific kind of relationship. "Let's come together to accomplish this great goal," says the leader. A follower decides completely



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