Senge sees the role of business leaders as being that of architect of a "generative (rather than adaptive) learning organization" that "discovers new ways of looking at the world, whether in understand customers or in understanding how to better manage the business." He suggests that "our traditional view of leaders - as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops - is deeply rooted in an individualistic and non-systemic world view." "So long as this myth prevails, they reinforce a focus on short-term events and charismatic heros rather than on systemic forces and organization learning."

Senge sees the new roles of leadership as:

1. **The Leader as Designer of the Organization**
   - designing the governing ideas of purpose, vision and core values by which people live within the organization
   - designing the policies, strategies and structures that translate governing ideas into business decisions
   - engaging people at all levels in the process of crafting the business strategy, and evolving that strategy as people continually learn more about shifting business conditions, and how to balance what is desired from what is possible (the key being not getting the right strategy, but fostering strategic thinking down and across the organization)
   - creating effective learning processes to facilitate continual improvement of the policies, strategies and structures already developed (e.g., using scenario analysis to help management to evolve their shares mental models of the company, its markets, and its competitors)

2. **The Leader as Coach**
   - helping people achieve more accurate, insightful and empowering views of the current business and organization realities
   - helping people uncover, express and evolve their assumptions and models of how the business works
   - helping people to see beyond superficial conditions and events to the underlying systemic causes of problems, and therefore to see new possibilities for shaping the future

3. **The Leader as Steward**
   - accepting that the first role of leadership is to serve, i.e., "to be in stewardship both for the people they lead, and for the larger purpose/mission that underlies the enterprise"
   - appreciating, and accepting responsibility for, the impact that one's leadership can have on others
   - respecting and acknowledging other people's commitment and sense of shared ownership towards the organization
   - having a sense of personal purpose and commitment to the organization's larger purpose/mission, in order to unleash people's natural impulse to learn when they become engaged in a worthwhile endeavor

"Leaders engaged in building learning organizations naturally feel part of a larger purpose that goes beyond their organization. They are part of changing the way businesses operate, not from a vague
philanthropic urge, but from a conviction that their efforts will produce more productive organizations, capable of achieving higher levels of organization success and personal satisfaction than more traditional organizations. Their sense of stewardship was succinctly captured by George Bernard Shaw when he said, "This is the true joy of life, in being used for a purpose you consider a mighty one, the being a force of nature..."

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