

How to Lead People

A veritable leader attracts followers. Authenticity in a leader allows trust to be built and maintained. Showing who he really is, his followers know what to expect from him and can rely on him, come hell or high water. A leader must project fearlessness in facing challenges. A leader must stand firm even in the presence of criticisms, but still having the courage to admit his mistakes. An effective leader listens emphatically. He welcomes ideas and inputs from his members. This promotes consensus building within the team. He creates enough opportunities for open communication then he capitalizes on the ideas shared within the group but making sure that he provides recognition for these ideas. Though he places a high value on dialogue and feedback, he knows when to take action. As a leader, he may often find himself with the dilemma of making or not making a decision. An effective leader, who is focused, authentic, courageous and emphatic, must also have the proper timing in making and executing decisions. If he gets the timing wrong on these critical decisions, all else stands to be nullified. It is his make or break. He must be able to prioritize and move with appropriate speed. A great leader uses time as his ally. Probing into actual setups, the aforementioned attributes may translate into the following. A leader must have talent or specific skills at some task at hand. He must possess initiative, tied up with a certain degree of charisma that motivates and stirs people to motion. He has dedication - a service to a cause with a clear sense of mission. A leader is results-oriented, optimistic, and is of the belief that he has the ability to "make a difference". He should also possess the ability to encourage people and foster growth in them. He must be a role model, someone who leads by example. Self-knowledge and self-awareness are also essential characteristics. However, it does not necessarily follow that someone having these qualities may achieve success in leading. He must also learn to use these exemplary qualities to influence his members of diverse talents and characters to work together to achieve a common vision. What follows are some guidelines that may aid aspiring leaders on how to effectively influence and subsequently lead people. Before one may lead, he must first understand the people who he will be leading. He must be able to see and understand his subordinates' situation in their point of view. Try "mirroring." Observe how they act, speak and think. In the long run, the people you are mirroring will feel more comfortable with you as if actually seeing themselves in you. Show genuine politeness. Be friendly. Make your subordinates feel how willing you are to extend assistance in case they would need it. This builds mutual trust within the group, which will promote a stronger team spirit. Being pleasant and friendly does not always cut it. A leader must also provide compelling evidence that he can deliver. A leader must be able to concretize ideas and implement them. A good reputation is most important, so build one and maintain it. A good leader inspires others to follow by setting an example. A leader sets the direction and strives to influence people to follow that direction. He must be a role model who adopts a persona that embodies his mission and vision, and is worthy of imitation. Avoid doing most of the work. Delegate tasks. Involve and utilize the most important resources at hand - your people. But be sure to follow through on their progress. Be generous in praise and recognition. Appreciate all contributions, big and small. There are numerous theories on leadership. Different leaders carry out their roles in a wide variety of styles, depending on the situation and circumstance. There are also various methods how leaders motivate and manage their people. But in the end, leadership is really all about faith, people and purpose. It is about having a vision, the faith that it can be done and the drive to enlist others in the pursuit of that purpose.

About the Author

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