

Leadership is a relationship TZ220908



Ten tips for everyday leadership

It's not the qualifications, the distinguished CV or the title that makes the leader, but what they do every day. David Kesby sets out the ten behaviours of a wise manager.



Leadership is an aspiration. To be a leader is a mark of merit – not just a job title. Leaders are all around us. They move people; they bind people together; they inspire people to go beyond the known horizon.

We should all aspire to develop our leadership every day. Below are some ideas and tips that can help. They are based around what leadership is all about - and what can be done on a day-to-day basis to improve it.

"The easiest way to lose credibility is to say one thing and do something else. Everyday it is important to work at delivering your promises. And if you fail to deliver, accept this as a reflection on yourself, so that you can in future be more authentic."

Leadership is a relationship

1. Leadership is about a relationship between leader and follower. It is therefore defined by the impact the leader has on people and activities around him or her, rather than simply the skill set or competencies that the person has. Leaders need to engage people. This is about listening hard to people - understanding their issues, desires, stories, moans. Build trust by being the first to trust in them.
2. Remember that followers have huge power in the leadership relationship: if they choose not to follow, you are not a leader. But also remember that as a leader you should be prepared to follow at times. Leadership is not a position it is a relationship, so everyday with every relationship, consider what you need to do at that moment - lead or follow?

Leadership occurs at all levels within organisations

3. Leadership is not confined to the top team in an organisation. Acts of leadership can happen throughout an organisation, from top to bottom. Non-managers as well as managers can be leaders. Leadership is expected in managers but not confined to managers. So it is therefore beyond hierarchy. As someone looking to lead this means being prepared to ask senior managers to follow you. Provide direction upwards, give guidance where it is appropriate. Do not always look to follow senior managers, just because they are senior.
4. Similarly, be prepared to follow other people, wherever they sit in your organisation. If they are inspiring you to action or providing clarity where there was otherwise a blur, take the role of follower and support that leader. By providing support you make them 'lead' and with it you move both you and your organisation forward.

Leadership is dynamic

5. Leadership is dynamic. Different people can take the lead at different times. Leadership is what is appropriate at the time and for the purpose in hand. If you are a leader who insists on leading all the time, you keep the relationship two-dimensional. By being prepared to follow at times will make the relationship three-dimensional.
6. It is hard work being a leader all the time – all day, every day. But if you truly trust other people, the basis of the relationship you have with others, you will provide opportunities to bring out the leader in them. To do this, consider stepping back, taking the follower role, be moved by someone else, be inspired by them, and show that you have. This sharing of the leadership role builds both motivation and helps deal with the practicalities of work.

Leadership needs to be authentic

7. Work every day to find what is authentic to you. Leaders need to find their own way to lead, to clarify what they stand for and what they truly aspire to be and to achieve. People who fail to be genuine, fail in their leadership. As a leader you need to work day in, day out at finding the best way that you personally lead. This means working everyday to understand who you are and what is important to you. Don't try to motivate people just because you think you ought to if you are not interested in knowing what turns each individual on or off.

8. The easiest way to lose credibility is to say one thing and do something else. Everyday it is important to work at delivering your promises. And if you fail to deliver, accept this as a reflection on yourself, so that you can in future be more authentic. You may try to copy other people that you admire. Don't forget that you are a unique individual in unique circumstances. Not everything anyone else does is right for you and for the leadership relationships you have.

Leaders take us to new places

9. Leadership is all about travelling on a journey from one place to another. It is about looking towards new horizons. It is about being able to create and inspire new visions, a need to change, overcoming barriers, winning hearts and minds, building cohesion and celebrating success. Every day, consider the next step you are taking on your long journey.

10. It is also about seeing where we have come from to understand the line of trajectory and to appreciate culture and meaning in others. Only when we really understand where we come from do we really appreciate where we are going. So spending time each day to consider the past, helps to maintain a sense of perspective.

Leadership is something that has to be worked on each day. What have you done today to develop the leader in you?

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