

Great Things to Know about Good Leaders

1. They know that leadership is influence.

Leadership is many things, but essentially it is about influence and the ability to influence others. The English word, “influence” means literally to “flow into” others. A leader is a person who directly and intentionally “flows into” others. The greater the influence he has, greater the leader. You can measure your effectiveness as a leader by the number of persons you directly influence each day, week, month a year or a lifetime.

2. They know that leadership is a process.

It has been said that leaders are born not made. This is only a half truth. Some are born with a temperament that can facilitate leadership skills, but the great leaders of the world know that leadership develops over time and requires discipline. Leadership grows daily not in a day; so busy yourself by sharpening your skills. The greater your skills the greater will be your opportunity to influence people. Moses begins by saying to God, “But Lord I stutter, how can I go to pharaoh and speak?” After God equips him, and faith moves him, Moses can lead a nation! He grew into the job. You can become more than you are if you set your mind and heart to do so.

3. They know that only you set the limits of your influence.

John Maxwell calls this “The Law of the Lid.” How great a leader do you want to be? Whatever you decide will “cap” or determine your influence and your future as a leader. You can increase your skills and only you can decide how good a mentor you wish to be; it means you are as good as you set out to be. “Hitch your wagon to a star, open your eyes and there you are!” Many people of great potential accomplish little because they cannot hitch a trailer to a car, much less a wagon to a star! Don’t limit yourself or God’s purposes thru you, by being lazy, or indifferent to a high calling.

4. They know that the fuel of the leader’s drive is his passion.

Leaders are passionate about their cause. Leaders have a fire in their belly that drives them to succeed. The leader is usually “consumed” with his vision or passion and he must share it with others. Leadership is as much caught as it is taught. Much of a leader’s ability is in his emotions as it is in his knowledge or ability. Give me a warrior who loves the battle any day over a soldier who has all the training but no

heart for the fight. Passion wins over planning most of the time. Both are needed for success, but it is difficult to stop a passionate leader.

5. They know that leaders are Navigators & Visionaries.

While flying my airplane I asked my wife if she wanted to “fly” the plane. She said “yes.” After holding the wheel for a few minutes, she said, “I can steer the plane but I don’t know where I’m going.” This tells us that most anyone can steer the ship, but only the leader can set the course. A leader is like the pilot who navigates. They have a vision, a direction they are going. To say a leader is the navigator, or pilot is to say that they are “big picture thinkers.” Usually leaders will leave the details to others. That’s why managers are not leaders. Managers must give attention to the details of the day to day. The Leader has a bigger vision than “our daily bread.” He is planning how to make enough bread to feed the world!

6. They know that leaders have learned to prioritize.

Jesus told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. [Matt. 6:33] This is the way great leaders think. They are good at putting 1st things 1st! Leaders have a unique ability to focus on the things that really matter. They don’t “sweat the small stuff.” The ability to prioritize your values, your time & energy is a good leadership talent.

7. They know that leaders are servants not bosses.

In the national bestselling book, “**Good to Great**” we learn that all the really great companies have a leader who is a servant to his people. This is a Jesus principle of Leadership. In John 13 is recorded the experience of Jesus washing the disciples feet. He tells them, “Do you know why I have done this to you? I am giving you my example, that even as I have washed your feet, you must also wash one another’s feet.” A great leader will never ask his followers to do something he himself is not willing to do. Military people tell legendary stories of their commanding officers leading the charge into battle. Risking life and limb, their general leads the fight. Like Mel Gibson in “**Brave Heart;**” portraying William Wallace he fearlessly leads his men into the fray. Leaders are servants, not bosses. Great leaders are not so much “Supervisors” & over-seers as they are “under-seers” and supporters. They lead from the bottom up, not from the top down.

8. They know that people will follow the man, before they will commit to his vision.

Often a young or immature leader will be very passionate about his vision and will try to get others to accept his vision and follow it. John Maxwell calls it the Law of “buy-in.” However, when people don’t

follow or “buy-into” his vision he cannot understand why. The reason is that men follow the leader before they accept and own his vision.

Think of how Jesus led his followers. He spent years with them letting them get to know Him, love Him, and eventually commit themselves to Him. Only then did He share His vision with them. Great leaders know that men follow a MAN of vision before they follow the vision. By being a humble servant, and a person of integrity & purpose, the leader is like a magnate drawing others to himself. Then he can compel them to follow his dream.

9. They know that a leader must win your heart before asking for a hand

Great leaders know that trust is a key to gaining followers. Men are not captured by ideas so much as by a man’s spirit. When people trust you they will follow you. Jesus knew this and before He asked his followers to do anything for Him like “take up your cross and follow me;” He first won their hearts. Far too often immature Christian leaders will ask others to support them financially, or to get involved in their projects, without first winning the trust and confidence of those they are asking to help them. For an example, some African pastor will hear that this “white guy” loves Africans and helps churches & pastors financially. So without so much as knowing the “white guy” he e-mails him his “vision” to build an orphanage. The white guy gets the e-mail proposal asking for money for orphans, and thinks, “Who is this African guy, whom I do not know, asking me for money?” I don’t know him and yet he dares to ask me to fund his work. Let me tell you Jesus would not do that. He would not ask for a helping hand without first winning your heart. A good leader will develop trust before asking anyone to adopt his vision.

10. They know that people follow a man they respect.

In Africa we call this the “Law of Mzee.” In Kiswahili language an “Mzee” is a wise older man. He is an older person whom many admire because of his life-experiences and wisdom. The African culture honors and respects the elderly. Our western culture tends to discount and devalue older people. However, a leadership principle is that people will not follow a man they do not respect. They may fear him, and come along, but they will not adopt his vision if they do not believe in him & respect him. Thus a good leader understands that it takes time and effort to win the people’s respect. His life message is the foundation of his leadership. It takes character to lead.

11. They know that great leadership is about reproduction.

A great leader can look at one man and see an army behind him. He knows that if he can inspire that one man, & train him to lead others, then he can multiply himself in his disciple. The Leader can do the math- multiplication is better than addition. To spread his vision he must reproduce himself in others. A

truly great leader of Christian men, Dawson Trotman, used to say, "Activity is no substitute for production, and production is no substitute for reproduction." The apostle Paul, another great leader told his young disciple Timothy to reproduce himself in other faithful men. {2nd Timothy 2:2}

Ask not what you have been doing, but ask yourself, "what are others doing because of what I have been doing." Leaders are born to reproduce. Jesus looked at the twelve disciples and saw the whole world in them! He trained them then gave them the great Commission to "Go and make disciples of all the nations..." He understood a leader's need to reproduce.

12. They leave a legacy.

This desire to multiply your vision in the lives of your followers comes from a passion to leave a legacy behind you after you are gone. A great leader is not just living for the "now;" but rather is living for the next generation. In John 17 when Christ is praying for his disciples he prays, *"I ask not just for them, Father, but for those who will believe in me because of them."* See, He was living for the legacy, for the future generations that would be saved thru the faithfulness of his followers. All great leaders believe that their cause, their vision is worthy to be perpetuated into the future. So leaders give themselves to investing their best time into their best people. They see a changed future; yes even a better future, lived out in their followers and their followers, followers. The leader's legacy; you are either building yours now or you are neglecting yours now.