

The Leader Within

PURPOSE

This lesson will help you develop your own personal definition of leadership by evaluating yourself, identifying the leadership behaviors that you desire most, and developing a plan for improvement of personal leadership behaviors.

The Study of Leadership

There have been a number of studies over the years directed at understanding effective leadership. The desire to assist people in the behaviors that effectively influence, lead, and guide others remains a highly regarded quality.

The more you understand the behaviors that create the desire to follow, the more you will be able to determine the leadership behaviors that will work best for you and, even more important, the ones that do not.

Have you ever wondered how some leaders influence, excite, stimulate, and energize others? When were you influenced, excited, stimulated, or energized by someone else to do something you thought impossible? Do you reflect on those times so you could copy the behaviors you liked? Think of those teachers you remember most. What was it they did that made you remember them?

As researchers continue to study the characteristics of leaders and as the world we live in continues to change through technology and human growth, we are finding that one key ingredient to leading others successfully is the

ability to successfully lead oneself. Leading from the inside out is the foundation to building successful relationships in your family, church, community, and school.

What Guides Your Behaviors?

Beliefs, values, and norms guide the actions of individuals and groups. They are like a traffic control system; they are signals giving direction, meaning, and purpose to our lives. They are powerful. Experiences involving such things as family, school, church, work, and social relationships shape your individual values, beliefs, and norms. Understand the importance of nurturing and shaping these qualities in your followers because they are fundamental motivating factors.

Mutual respect between you and your team members motivates them to follow your orders. So, make it a general rule to think through situations and choose the course of action that will gain you the long-term respect of your followers, seniors, and peers. By earning their respect, you will be exerting your influence on their beliefs, values, and norms.

What Is Your Self-Image?

Leading from the inside out means to set examples and model the behavior that you want others to exhibit. By knowing what is important to you, you can make sure your actions are supporting the things you value most. You need to lead yourself before you can lead others.

Self
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It is what
about your
characteristi
physical
morals and
your needs
and your
Having a
image is being satisfied with and accepting what
you see in yourself.

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good self-

When you become a leader, you need to constantly be aware of how you see yourself. Be honest with yourself and try not to have illusions about who you are or what you would like to be. If you believe that you cannot do a task, or if you are not consistent with the values that you think you have, then you may begin to have doubts about yourself. Leaders who openly display doubt, hesitation, or uncertainty in their own abilities will likely cause their followers to have doubts about them and their ability to lead.

If what you see is not who or what want to be, you can make changes. You can become the person you want to be. You will need to determine what is important to you and what you value most. If you begin to think positively about yourself, others will see your confidence and will want to follow you.

Here are some things to remember as you begin to develop your self-image:

Focus on the Positive: One way to improve your self-image is to identify all of the positive qualities that you possess. A certain amount of emphasizing the positive is necessary to boost your own self-image. What do you like MOST about yourself? How can you do MORE of what you like most?

Self-disclosure: Self-disclosure is talking to others about you. As you talk to others, you will realize that your problems and shortcomings are no different from theirs. What do they like MOST about you? How can you do MORE of what they like most about you?

Making the Change

Once you identify the behaviors that you wish to have, then what? Think of ways to fit the behavior into your personality and into the way you want to lead. Use that skill whenever it is appropriate--practice will make it a part of your style.

On the other hand, changing a negative behavior into a positive one is not easy. It may be like breaking an old habit. Use the following steps to change a negative behavior:

1. Realize the need for change
2. Have a positive attitude toward the change
3. Follow through

Change is never easy, so keep trying. Just like other tasks, change requires dedication and perseverance. If you can perform a task a certain way and can see it through to completion that positive behavior can become a lifetime habit.

Conclusion

As a leader, you are responsible for making decisions, but do not decide on a course of action without thinking over the consequences -- the choice you make should be based on your values. Then, apply these values to every leadership situation in order to build the trust and confidence of your followers. Finally, beware of

Category 1 –Leadership
Skill 1 –Objectives of Leadership

temptations and pressures that can affect a leadership situation. Remember, anyone can make a decision, but effective leaders base their decisions on the highest moral good. Let your personal and professional codes of ethics guide you to do what is morally right. ❖

