

Leadership defined

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Leadership

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As defined by Webster, a leader is someone who has commanding authority or influence or a first or principal performer of a group. It is my position that Leadership, in essence, is the sum of these definitions. In order to have and maintain commanding authority, a leader must be the principal performer of his/her group.

Leadership, based on examples presented by Michael Hanna and Gerald Wilson, is dynamic. The field of knowledge has developed through a series of trials and discoveries, ranging from the Classical scientific theory to contemporary Total Quality Management. With this in mind, leadership should be classified as a soft science, just as philosophy, sociology and psychology. Leadership, without regard to method, is an art; the skillful application of leading is much the same as the skillful application of brushstrokes by a painter. Being both rational and emotional, it involves both sides of human experience. It includes actions and influences based on reason and logic as well those based on inspiration and desire. Leadership also requires involvement working within the social context shared among all members of a group. As illustrated through the Hawthorne experiment, empathy and involvement are important elements of leadership.

Is management the same as leadership? Management is a position of authority. Management says what need to get done and supplies the material to get it done. Management tends to be the more educated than the experienced. Managers can be trained to hold a position. Though

management is often a position of leadership. Leadership and management are not the same. Anyone can be a manager and not have anyone to lead. Being able to manage requires understanding the aspects of a particular task or mission. A leader must motivate followers to the completion of the mission. Simply stated, management sets the stage and directs and the leadership motivates and makes it happen. Both need support from each process in order to achieve its' goals.

Leadership is not just based on the leader. In assessing leadership you must look at the leader, the follower, and the situation or task. In order to do an assessment of the leader, evaluate what is expected from those following. Look at the situation and environment that surrounds the whole concept. Both the leader and followers must serve a common goal. Leadership is 100% service and 100% partnership, to maintain good leadership; one must develop a working relationship between themselves and followers. There are different types of followers, alienated, conformist, pragmatist, and exemplary followers. Alienated followers are the ones that are irritants, who like to always point out the negative aspect on everything and overlook the positive aspects. The conformist follower is the yes person, or "brown noser" within a group. As long as things are in conformance with social and organizational standards, as long as promotions and other aspects of the job are equal there's really no problem. Pragmatist are not committed to workgroup goals but have learned not to make waves, basically they will do only what is needed to get by. The exemplary follower is almost like a self-leader. They can adjust to any situation. They are independent, innovative, creative and willing to stand up to superiors. A strong follower helps a good leader to

become a better leader. This could also bring on a well-bonded working relationship. In evaluating the leadership process, a lot of things come into play. Followers usually play a key role in organizational successes and failures, yet these outcomes are often attributed solely to leaders. Everyone has spent and will spend more time as a follower than as a leader. Spending time reflecting on follower experiences may be one important key to leadership success. Values play a central part of a leader's psychological makeup. Values are an important component of the moral reasoning process. Values also serve to organize attitudes, which are general and enduring positive or negative feelings about some person, object, or issue. There are two sets of attitudes that play a role in leadership. They are the attitudes leaders have about themselves and the attitudes leaders have about others. Managing stress is also an important skill for leaders and followers to have. They both must learn to monitor their own stress levels and each other's. If symptoms of stress are detected, they must work together to pinpoint the cause. Many studies have been done and no one still knows what makes a true leader, though some characteristics have been linked to poor leadership, such as being uninformed, rigid, nonparticipating, and offensive verbally, or having an authoritarian behavior. Even those individuals with extensive knowledge of leadership research may be poor leaders. Leadership does not occur without followers.

In conclusion, whether the power of authority is legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, or referent, we all are leaders in our own way at different times in our lives. Friends look to each other for advice, parents and teachers provide instruction to children, and first line supervisors guide employees throughout

the day. Likewise, we are at the same time followers under the authority of another. It is this relationship that brings together the art leadership and being a principal performer.

Bibliography

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