

Is Leadership a Gift or An Acquired Skill?

Make a decision. If you aspire to be a company leader, believe in yourself.

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You've all heard the expression, "He or she was a born leader." I wonder if that's true.

It seems to me with insight and determination, anyone can learn the skills necessary to be a leader.

Volumes have been written on leadership. Lectures have been delivered on leadership. There are thousands of quotes on leadership. So, what then is leadership? What characteristics are indicative of a leader?

I set out to enlist some of the greatest minds and the most impactful ideas on leadership to share with you.

Network marketers build their organizations by being and creating leaders.

It's the leaders that get rewarded with big checks, bonus trips and recognition. Leaders look for individuals that can be groomed to be leaders because they are the representatives who are motivated to build large down lines, get selected for training and help shape a company's direction.

Joe Tye, Founder of *Never Fear Never Quit*, defines leadership as a state of mind. He believes anyone can be a leader who is willing to seek opportunities to add value, to make a contribution and to make a difference – and then to take action to make something happen. He says if one does that, people will follow. (Great network marketers understand this.)

In his book, *Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns describes *transactional* leadership and *transforming* leadership. The former is the essence of business management and implies some form of exchange: money for goods, paychecks for work. By contrast, transforming leadership occurs when there is a relationship between leader and followers in which both are raised to high levels of performance expectations and moral values. It is thus transforming and elevating. (Another network marketing skill!)

In the Nov/Dec '06 issue of *Success Magazine*, Colin Powell offered leadership lessons which included: "Never be afraid to make people mad." Good leadership involves responsibility to the welfare of the group. "Never neglect the details." When everyone's mind is distracted, the leader must be doubly vigilant. "Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds."

In the same magazine, Mar/Apr '07, Larry Bird, NBA Hall of Famer, also offered a few of his leadership lessons.

“Surround yourself with good people and good things always happen.”

"Hide your weaknesses; play to your strengths." Recognize your assets and employ them to the best of your ability. "Make choices based on what's best for the team." "It's all about preparation." "Your staff is depending on you." Those individuals in your organization expect you to act with integrity on their behalf and is imperative to good leadership. It insures respect.

Zig Ziglar says it this way: “Businesses are a reflection of its leader. Companies don’t succeed or fail from the bottom. Leadership is top driven and permeates the organization from the top down. The leader must define the reality of the tasks and goals that are established.” Your organization looks to you for guidance, reassurance and sustainability.

Some more thoughts on leadership:

***Leadership is a verb, not a noun.
You don’t become a leader; you
serve as a leader and grow as a
leader.***

While all organizations need leaders, this is especially true in network marketing. To be a more effective leader, concentrate on pursuing your strengths and passions rather than money and status. In his book, *Love and Profit*, James A. Autry, a leadership expert based in Des Moines, distinguishes between loving the job and loving the work. You’re more likely to develop as a leader if you love your work for the sake of the work itself. Leaders in network marketing love the challenge, the pursuit and the unknown. They thrive on who they will enroll with the potential to be their next leader!

It takes courage to be a leader and requires developing mental toughness. It’s knowing how to face difficult situations without loss of mental clarity. Leaders are big thinkers; they tackle big challenges with big plans. Leaders understand that the bigger the dream, the greater the challenge. Every great accomplishment was once the ‘impossible dream’ of a dreamer who simply refused to quit when the going got tough.

Leadership is a sales job and effective leaders work hard to master the art of persuasion. The job of leadership is selling people on the values, the beliefs and the dreams that will create a desired future.

(Miscellaneous ideas from Joe Tye’s “Spark Plug” Newsletter Dec ‘04)

Years ago I came across a document called, *Leadership in Action Creed*. The author is unknown; the principles are priceless. It states the following:

1. I believe in Leadership in Action, in the people I am working with and in my ability to get results.
2. I believe that honest service can be sold to honest people by honest methods.
3. I believe in working, not waiting, in laughing, not weeping, in boosting, not knocking, and in the pleasure of selling service.
4. I believe that a person gets what he goes after and that no person is down and out until he has lost faith in himself.
5. I believe in today and the work I am doing. I believe in tomorrow and the work I hope to do and the sure reward which the future holds. I believe in courtesy, in kindness, in generosity, in good cheer, in friendship and honest competition.
6. I believe the best way to help myself is by helping the other person first.

So, here I am reviewing and reflecting on leadership - what it means and identifying the characteristics of a leader. Recognizing you are a subscriber of The Network Marketing Magazine and on your own journey of personal and professional development, it is likely you are already a leader in your organization. If not, you can certainly implement ideas and strategies to become one. It simply comes down to this: make a decision. If you aspire to be a company leader, believe in yourself.

Until next time.....

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Bonnie Ross-Parker, America's Connection Diva, is a multi-dimensional entrepreneur with a background in teaching, franchising, network marketing, direct selling, mentoring and publishing. She has had several articles published, is a Certified Network Marketer and authored two books: *Walk In My Boots - The Joy of Connecting* and *Y.O.U. - Set A High Standard for Being Human*. Passionate about networking, in August, 2002, Bonnie launched her licensed program, "The Joy of Connecting" - an innovative program for women who are serious about growing their business. Women who participate are entrepreneurs, professionals and business owners. There are currently 60 locations for The Joy of Connecting in 12 states. Check it out at: www.TheJOYofConnecting.com Bonnie travels nationwide providing workshops on "Effective Networking for Effective Results" and primarily focuses on women in the profession of direct selling/network marketing.
