

TEN RULES OF LEADERSHIP

The dictionary defines leadership as a person who has commanding authority and influence. Generally we think of leaders as those who campaign to win our vote, who call a meeting to order, and who delegate tasks. But leading also includes initiating a conversation, inspiring a shared vision and enabling others to act.

1. CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY

Character and Integrity are demonstrated by key qualities:

- Be as good as your word
- Actions must match your word
- Loyalty runs deep. Be true to subordinates, constituents, or colleagues and most will return in kind. Be disloyal and that too will be repaid in kind.
- Create a safe environment for people to work and participate. Public gossip or complaints about others gives permission to others to do the same. It also creates distrust.

2. CREATE VISION

- Citizens will fight for what they believe in. Citizens will fight to defend what they create. Leaders need to show voters how to defend and build on what citizens created.

3. KEEP THE VISION IN SIGHT FOR EVERYONE

- The original vision is a tool to keep everyone focused.
- The original goal should be used to keep everyone working together when there is a natural tendency to fight over specifics. Too often, the debate over the specifics will divide participants into factions. A leader uses the vision to keep everyone together. "A house divided will fall". Abraham Lincoln

4. BUILD NEW LEADERS

- As a leader, it your job to mentor new leaders. The vision will never be complete until there are many individuals with the ability to lead at every level of a project.
- Leadership through encouragement rather than criticism is more successful.
- Leadership that focuses on problem solution rather than placement of blame or the award of credit will be more successful.
- Leadership is responsible for the placement of talent in the capacities best suited to each individual's skills and personalities.

5. ENCOURAGE DISAGREEMENT

The leader must keep people focused on the overall goal when the debate becomes unproductive.

The leader must set the tone to insure that the debate is over principles not personalities.

The leader protects the vision from an "us versus them" debate or a discussion on "who is right and who is wrong".

6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FINAL DECISION

To be open to other's ideas, to be open and encourage discussion and debate are critical elements of leadership. Another critical element is the ability to make the final decision and to assume final responsibility for the decision.

A decision is better than no decision or a decision that is thrust upon the circumstance because research and debate never ended.

A leader assumes the final responsibility for the decision regardless of outcome. A leader shares credit in a successful result. A leader accepts blame, solely, in the event of an unsuccessful result.

7. STAYS AWAY FROM PERSONAL DISPUTES AMONG COLLEGUES

A leader who has all parties focused on the vision can allow room for people within the organization to disagree and to simply not like one another. But leadership that has the character and integrity to provide respect to all members of the organization, creates the vision for all to see and agree to, and maintains an environment where principle, not personalities are the issues of debate, need not participate or become involved in personal arguments or problems.

8. HAVE A PLAN - But Be Flexible and Adapt to Change

A leader creates a plan that states the objectives as well as the details so the plan can remain flexible when circumstances change.

A leader permits personal flexibility to change based on circumstances. In some circumstances, a good leader must be prepared to step back and let others lead, other times a good leader has to be part of the "work crew" to motivate people forward.

9. THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY, SUCCINTLY AND ARTICULATELY

Instructions to participants or subordinates and reports to superiors should be as clear, direct, and concise as possible.

- Where possible, make communications articulate with memorable words and phrases.
- Develop good habits of concentration and memory to focus on the task at hand.
- Listen carefully as others debate and challenge ideas and programs. In doing so, a leader is provided insight to the subtext of an individual's arguments and sentiments. It also provides keen insight into how best communicate with each individual.
- Communications should motivate as well as instruct.

10. USE ALL AVAILABLE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Make tools and technology available to those you ask to complete the task.

- Unfortunately, war is the best test of new technology for communications. Even the origins of the Internet are based on the military needs during the Cold War.
- Throughout history, the military commander who willingly used the newest communications technology and ensured that his lieutenants had access to it as well emerged the victor. Leaders have to know and understand communications tools and make them work for success. Just as important, leaders must provide the right tools to complete assignments delegated.
- Leaders adapt to the times rather than expect the times to adapt to them.
- Leaders must understand available resources and create the plan to accommodate those resources.

Men and women do lead in different ways and styles. Because men are traditionally viewed as leaders, the most commonly accepted leadership style is the male or traditional style. But women can lead in their own style and way. Here is a list comparing the traditional or male style of leadership and the female style.

Traditional Style

Establish vertical hierarchies
 Focus on answers
 Rigid role identity
 Single-minded
 Resists change
 Goal-driven
 Life is a series of destinations

Female Style

Build teams
 Look for the right questions
 Identity adaptable
 Multi-minded
 Seeks change
 Process-oriented
 Life is a journey