

Qualities That Make You A Leader

1.) Happy New Year From Northwood Consulting!

Hoping 2002 brings you much peace, joy, good health, prosperity, and other gifts far beyond your greatest expectations.

2.) Quick Quote To Consider

"The bottom line is that leadership shows up in the inspired action of others. We traditionally have assessed leaders themselves. But maybe we should assess leadership by the degree to which people around leaders are inspired." Dr. Jack Weber, Professor of Management, University of Virginia

3.) Review Of The Month — Making A Difference; Qualities That Make You A Leader

by Sheila Murray Bethel*

Over the years, there have been numerous titles published on what makes great leaders. We wanted to introduce you to an insightful yet easy-to-read book on the attributes possessed by most effective leaders. The Leading Edge has excerpted some key thoughts from Bethel's book along with a few of our own suggestions on how to begin to put some of these ideas to work for you. Regardless of your current level of leadership, we think you'll find this book a valuable addition to your professional library.

Let's start out with a quick quiz:

Look through the following list of possible qualities possessed by effective leaders. Check the ones you think most leaders possess.

Qualities most leaders possess

1. Has a mission
2. Is a big thinker
3. Has high ethics
4. Masters change
5. Is sensitive
6. Is a risk taker
7. Is a decision maker
8. Uses power wisely
9. Communicates effectively
10. Is a team builder
11. Is courageous
12. Is committed

If you checked all 12 qualities, congratulations! If you did not check all 12, are you surprised by some of the qualities that maybe you didn't think were important? According to Sheila Murray Bethel, author of Making A Difference, there are 12 common denominators all leaders possess, as listed above.



During the past few months, we've seen extraordinary examples of effective leadership. So what separates a good leader from a great leader? A great leader is someone who can influence others to think, act, follow and set an example that others choose to follow. He or she brings out the best in others and allows people to perform at levels beyond what they think they are capable of achieving.

Let's take a look at three of Bethel's 12 leadership qualities that great leaders possess.

Quality 1: Have A Mission

"...There is a good way to find out if a person is truly a leader. Ask them what their mission is. You won't have to explain the term "mission"; they will understand. After you ask the question, just keep quiet because they will immediately give you an answer.

When I spoke with Tom Landry, former head coach of the Dallas Cowboys, I asked him which of the 12 qualities he thought were most important. He said: missions that matter, decision making and communications. He quickly said missions were first, "because in my business we all know what our goal is—to win football games. Missions are tremendously important. I translate that, in our terms, as having a philosophy about what we want to be as a football team. This is what I try to stress with the Cowboys that we must believe in the philosophy that we have to be successful. Once you get your staff, your players, and your organization in tune with that, everything else falls into place as far as the leadership is concerned."

Clarifying Your Mission

...The more clearly defined the mission, the more effective you become and the more you can make a difference. The deeper the passion for your mission, the more it acts as a magnet for others and creates what is called charisma...

To help you clarify your mission and to focus on how you can make a difference, you need to ask yourself some questions:

1. What is the most important thing in the world to me?

Your mission grows out of your own unique view of what is important in your life and the world...

2. Where do I start and how?

Taking the first step is often the hardest part of any endeavor. Look around for inspiration and directions...

3. How much time can I devote to my mission?

You will need to decide what part it plays in your life. Will it be all-consuming? Or will it be something for which you carefully allocate the needed hours? Even the busiest person can schedule time for something that matters...



4. Do I have the skills and knowledge I need?

Do you need further education or training to have an impact, to make a difference? There are many ways you could avail yourself of the knowledge you need to clarify your

5. Am I staying open to all the possibilities?

Openness and flexibility is important. One of the most exciting elements of having a mission is growing beyond your original vision because you stayed flexible...

... True leadership qualities are developed and sustained by having a mission. Some leaders identify a lifetime mission. Others have different missions at different stages of their lives. It isn't "wrong" not to have a mission that matters, but without one you can't reach your full potential as a leader. Your mission is your driving force..."

Reflective exercise:

What is your mission? If you have one, write your mission statement down in 20 words or less.

If you don't have a mission, reread the section on clarifying your mission and begin today to build your mission statement. This could make a profound difference in your professional and personal life.

Quality 4: Masters Change

"We are living in an exciting age of unprecedented change. The futurists report that in the 50 years between 1970 and 2020 we will experience change equivalent to that of the last 500 years!..."

...Change is not new. It is the rate of change that is affecting us so dramatically. This acceleration has presented us with unique challenges. As the rate of change increases, we will have to increase our willingness and our ability to adapt. Rosabeth Moss Kanter coined the term "Change Masters" and defines these people and organizations as "adept at the art of anticipating the need for and of leading productive change." The future is in your hands if you are a change-master leader...

The 6 Keys To Enhancing Your Ability To Change

To be a change master you must first learn to handle change yourself. Then you can take your skills, talents, and abilities and help others change. Let's look at some specific ways to enhance your mastery of change.

Key #1 – "Don't Fight It!"

That is easier said than done. The natural tendency is to protect what you know and value, what has become familiar or comfortable. Psychologist Perry Buffington says: "When one is young with pristine goals upon which to focus, the effects of change are more easily minimized. As one ages, with more and more accumulated failures and less time to achieve, change takes its toll."



Leon Martel, in *Mastering Change, The Key To Business Success*, describes three common traps that keep us from recognizing and using change:

1. Believing that yesterday's solutions will solve today's problems.
2. Assuming present trends will continue.
3. Neglecting the opportunities offered by future change.

As a leader you can't afford this kind of comfort-zone thinking. You have to develop a constant flow of new solutions. Two important questions for you to ask yourself are:

- At what level do I resist change?
- About what issues do I resist change?

Key #2 – "You Don't Have To Like The Change"

But as a leader you need to take an intellectual approach to understanding change so you can adjust to and progress with a situation or experience. You must study, explore and read everything you can about the change in which you are involved... Leaders stay on top of the information about the changes in business, industry and their personal lives. Our future is directly linked to our ability to respond quickly and with flexibility. We are more effective when we are informed... You don't have to like the change, but you must anticipate it, recognize it, and understand it.

Key #3 – "Be Willing To Let Go Of The Past"

With the rate of change accelerating every day, being able to let go of the past is vital to your ability to lead. When you make a conscious effort to turn off the old tapes that are constantly playing in your mind, when you release yourself from the burden of other people's "oughts and shoulds," when you resist peer pressure to stay with what is comfortable, and when you break the chains of the pressures of society, you make giant strides toward becoming a change master...

Key #4 – "Have A Sense Of Humor"

The leader who can use humor to relieve the stress of change is a powerful and sensitive leader. Using humor doesn't trivialize serious situations. It puts overwhelming circumstances in perspective. President Reagan gave us a perfect example of how a leader can use humor. After he was shot by a would-be assassin and rushed to the hospital, the medical staff was astonished to find the president of the United States as their patient...

In the midst of fear and uncertainty, the president's sense of humor relieved everyone's stress. Despite his pain, he grinned and said to his wife, Nancy, "I forgot to duck." A well-developed sense of humor is one of the most charismatic qualities of leadership. In times of change, humor can make a difference.

Key #5 – "Expect To Succeed"

When unexpected events occur, the value of a leader with a high-faith factor cannot be underestimated. Expecting success to follow a period of change affects your attitude and that of your followers. It is a powerful motivator. A high-faith factor is faith in your own God-given skills, talents, and abilities. It is your faith in other people's desire to do well.

When you have faith that you and others in your organization will handle change well, you'll be a strong leader.

Key #6 – "Build A Personal Coping Strategy"

...One of the most important responsibilities of a leader is the personal ability to cope with change and its side effects. To prevent burnout and relieve pressures, we need some tools and ideas to keep us in balance. Here are some suggestions that can help:

- Peer communications — You will function more effectively when you have someone to talk to who understands the joys and successes, the difficulties and frustrations of leadership. Find time to be in the company of your peers.
- Physical fitness plays an enormous role in your ability to withstand the pressures and challenges of daily changes. Annual physical exams, diet awareness, and an exercise program that is compatible with your life style all give you great return on investment.
- Planning Time — Dr. Perry Buffington writes: "The most effective way to minimize (the negative affect of) change is through planning. The more understanding you have of a soon-to-happen event, the less debilitating change will be. The more you know about change, the less intimidating it is."

The only thing any of us knows for sure is that everything will change. As a leader the best you can do is keep change in perspective. Humorist Mark Russell recently put change in perspective. He asked, "Do you ever feel as though you are caught in a speed trap? Are you overwhelmed by change? Any time you think the world is moving too fast, just stop by the post office!"

When change brings success, you hope to keep your ego from getting out of hand. When the change is negative you need your sense of humor to get you through. Your balance is key to helping followers adapt and change...

Reflective exercise:

Write down your answers to the following questions:

- At what level do you resist change?
- About what issues do you resist change?

Now that you're aware of the level and issues you tend to resist, take the next 30 days to begin to modify your behavior around change. At the end of 30 days, reflect back to when you started and measure your progress. You'll be amazed at your success if you decide to become a change master.

Through out the coming months, The Leading Edge will continue to bring you new insights into the qualities possessed by great leaders.

We encourage you to pick up Bethel's book on Making A Difference in order to help you develop your desired leadership qualities. Or perhaps now is the time for you to begin a coaching program to support you in reaching your new goals. It could make a difference in how you lead in your professional and personal life.



If you and your staff would like to sharpen your leadership abilities through executive coaching or leadership retreats, e-mail Marti Campbell or Karen Depew at info@northwoodconsulting.com.

* Source: Making A Difference: 12 Qualities That Make You A Leader by Sheila Murray Bethel Berkley Publishing Group

4.) Jump Start The New Year — Make Your Professional And Personal Resolutions A Reality, Not Just A Wish!

On January 1, did you make some resolutions to make positive adjustments to your professional or personal life? Are you facing challenging professional or personal issues?

If so, do you have a plan for making your resolutions or goals a reality? Now is a great time to work with an executive coach to help you make profound changes in your life. Since the best way to learn about coaching is to experience it, share our offer for a FREE coaching session.

Call Coach Marti at (301) 650-4160 or Coach Karen at (301) 990-6331 to schedule a FREE one-hour coaching session. There's no obligation — just an opportunity to find out how powerful coaching can be.