

Traits of an Effective, Respected, & Liked Leader

By Virginia Reeves

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TRAITS OF AN EFFECTIVE, RESPECTED AND LIKED LEADER

A truly energizing leader acts as a catalyst - the one who ultimately gets people going. They move others out of their comfort zone by believing in them and providing the support those people need to take risks. This person can raise the passion and enthusiasm of others so they want to take action. Change is looked upon as something to embrace, not fear. Challenges are met with open minds and more optimism versus pessimism. One of the principles in the Dale Carnegie Training program is for a leader to become a consensus builder. A major point is to arouse interest in your ideas by asking for advice and opinions. Make the phrase "What if..." a standard working tool. When people have had a say in setting a goal or putting together a proposal, they are more willing to work hard to make it work right.

A respected and liked leader operates from a base of integrity and honesty. You can be trusted to do what you say you will do and people believe that you will act for the good of the situation, the firm, and/or them - depending on the circumstances. Others may not like what is happening but they know the leader is acting upon what he or she believes is the best option given the timing and situation. While these traits can make you vulnerable, you will generally find that people will stand up with you and behind you for support. Telling people the good, the bad, and all the important details in between builds a base for them to share with you. Many times, an innovative suggestion will emanate from an unexpected source.

Leaders find ways to create small wins for the team as this helps to motivate people to continue striving and achieving towards individual and group efforts. Opportunities are set up to reach achievable goals so that good feelings of esteem and attitude are regularly obtained.

A sense of humor helps keep the perspective - especially when times are tense or troubled. Let's face it, hardly anything in life can't be laughed at if you look for that element. We tend to look for the worst so go for it and magnify those scenarios until you find the ludicrous in the situation. Of course, humor is important for everyday use as well - so many studies have proven this over and over. We've all heard that laughter is the best medicine - and it's true. Jim Rohn states that "in leadership we learn that it's okay to be witty, but not silly. It's okay to be fun, but not foolish."

Over the years I have found a great deal of truth to the following statement made by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. "Some of the best leadership lessons I learned as a young officer were from terrible officers. I mean, absolutely morally bankrupt officers who had no redeeming qualities. People followed them out of sheer wonder for what they would do next. You learn far more from

negative leadership than from positive leadership. Because you learn how not to do it. And, therefore, you learn how to do it."

A good leader learns to listen attentively to what is behind said between the lines and for ferreting out what else needs to be brought out into the open. Words left unspoken can often be the most dangerous because they lurk and fester. Also, an astute leader notices who isn't saying anything and tries to find out why and then find out what was left unstated. An open environment will tell you a lot but rarely will each individual involved be totally upfront about what is on their mind. Feedback and alternative perspectives are essential to a healthy organization of any type.

Discovering the way someone processes their thoughts and how those turn into actions is a prime responsibility for an effective leader. The method a person arrives at for his or her conclusions can be the basis for understanding how that person views their world, how they find solutions to problems, how they will interact with others, and if they work better on their own or as part of a team.

An innovative and interesting way to engage people's imagination is to make use of slogans. These can make a big difference in attitude and productivity. Advertisers have known this for a long time and companies have built up a certain image internally and externally by branding their strategy, product, or service with a slogan. The words may be forceful (as in Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream") or they may be more subtle and only used within a small group as their private cheer or motivating statement. This idea can work for a corporate company, a special team, a club, or an individual entrepreneur.

Being an effective, liked, and respected leader entails a lot of characteristics that aren't always easy to live up to and live with. But they will make you successful and people will be loyal to you - regardless of the circumstances. Act with integrity, be accountable, express interest, act with quality, be dynamic and flexible, show humor, reassure your working companions that you are there for them, create winning situations, and be a catalyst. You probably already incorporate most of these traits into your life - now enhance them to enlarge your base of positive power.

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