

# 10 Points to be a Successful Leader

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[Unique Leaders](#)

Everyone would consider people like Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and George Washington to be good leaders. Even in business, people like Fred Maytag, Henry Ford and Lee Iacocca are considered good leaders. What do these people have in-common? Are there any commonalities which will make for a successful leader?

For 30 years I have been in business. I have been a manager (all levels), administrator, and owner of my own companies. I always wanted to be a good leader, so for most of business career I have studied different leaders, I have noticed 10 points which all of them had. They did not have these to same degree, but all the leaders, both world and business, had these. I will tell you the points and then explain how I use each one, along with the results.

I divide the 10 points into 2 groups; attitude and skills. Amazingly each group has 5 points. Under attitude we have:

- 1) Worked towards the greater good
- 2) Suffered with their soldiers or people
- 3) Fought wars, only when necessary
- 4) Had strong personalities
- 5) They were willing to take risks

Under the skills we have:

- 1) Great communication skills
- 2) Great planning skills
- 3) Great delegating skills
- 4) Great at being Proactive
- 5) Good at negotiations

These are the Essential 10, as I call them. Every leader who was missing one or more of these had extreme difficulties or just plain failure. As an example we will look at Fred Maytag and his son E.H. Maytag.

Fred understood people. He wanted to help people. In bad times he suffered with his employees. On the other hand, E.H. was only concerned about the business and money. Yes, you would say he was a great businessman, but was he a leader? He led the company, but he did not lead people.

Because E.H. Maytag lacked that concern for the people and did not suffer with the troops, it cost him labor problems. In fact in July of 1938, he had to sign a deal and allow the union into the company. All because he cut employee's salaries by 10% and had continued to anger his employees. Good business move, but a poor leadership move.

In contrast, the union would have never gotten in if his father Fred Maytag was in power. Fred inspired his people. They were loyal to him, because he was loyal to them. When there were good times, everyone enjoyed and when there were bad times, everyone suffered. How much greater could Maytag Company have been if E.H. Maytag was a leader of the people like his father?

As you see, if you are missing one of the Essential 10, you will not be an effective leader of people. You may do well as a businessman, but as a leader of the people you will fail. As to how successful each leader was that depended on how well the Essential 10 were developed.

As an example, Alexander the Great did not develop his communication skills. He had them, but he was weak in that area and did not develop it. His oversight almost cost him everything. Three times his men revolted, because of misunderstandings. These could have been avoided and he would have accomplished more, but the fact remains that he did not develop this skill.

How well each of the Essential 10 is developed will serve as a gauge to your success. Henry Ford stands as a good example of this principle.

Henry Ford saw the BIG picture and he wanted to help the average person, he gave his employees more to help them, he only went up against the competition after his son persuaded him to do so, he definitely had a strong personality, he would not be pushed by anyone, he took many risks, some of which did not work, but he tried, he made sure people understood him and tried to make sure that he understood what they said, he planned out things years in advance, he knew he could not do everything himself so he gave some things to others to complete, but he made sure they were capable and then held them accountable, he was always looking for what could go wrong and trying to prevent it or at least be prepared for it. Yes, he exercised all of the Essential 10 and developed them and as you know Henry Ford was a great success.

Now let us look at the Essential 10. So that there is little confusion about how I am using each of these phrases, I will explain them.

## **GREATER GOOD**

Everyone one of the world leaders mentioned started out to improve things for their people or the country, even Hitler wanted to improve Germany at first. They had a vision of what the people could be or what their country could be and they united the people to accomplish that vision. Their initial aim was not to conquer the world, but to help their people. Even in business the leader must have a vision and he has to look out for the people. You are only as good as the people who work for you!

If the person's eyes are focused only on the bottom line, he will fail (as a leader). He will make some happy and the others will be unhappy. This leads to revolts, strikes and more problems than he can counter. He must think of all the people; the shareholders,

management, the workers and even the consumer. He must see the BIG picture and how to include everyone into that picture. Then he must institute policies which will be fair to all.

This is a difficult, but not an impossible job. The leader will know how to show each group that his ways are the best for everyone. As the Japanese are fond of saying, a win – win scenario.

Even Genghis Khan had a vision of how his people should be. He united the people into one group and stopped the bickering between tribes. He made laws that were fair to everyone. He wanted peace and security for his people.

Henry Ford wanted to provide a car that everyone could afford. He didn't want just the rich to enjoy this luxury, he wanted everyone to enjoy it.

Lee Iacocca wanted to save the jobs of thousands of people. He wanted to save the honor of the US. He wanted to help the people of America.

Only when we lose sight of the greater good do we start doing what is wrong. When Napoleon wanted more than just the greater good of the French, he met his Waterloo.

## **SUFFERING WITH THE TROOPS**

This is another weak point for today's leaders. Not many are willing to take a cut in pay. Not many are willing to move to a lower rent area. Not many are willing to suffer with the troops.

Suffering with the troops means if the company is doing poorly, you take less money, shorter paid vacations, less perks, etc. Today's leaders are not willing to sacrifice anything of their own for the good of all. They will cut the number of workers the company has, but they will not cut their own pay or benefits. They will cut the retirement benefits, but they will not cut their own benefits. That is why you see labor disputes and poor performance in companies. Why would you be loyal to a person who might stab you in the back at the first sign of financial loss?

Imagine if the CEO cut his own pay by 20% and then asked the employees to take a 10% pay cut to help get the company back on track. What do you think the outcome would be? Yes, some would not want to take the cut, but the majority would see the example of the leader and follow him. Remember the old saying, **“Lead by example.”**

Suffering with the troops does a lot to galvanize the group. Every time it has happened, the troops came together as a stronger unit and fought harder than they had before. The Americans had almost lost the revolutionary war, then at Valley Forge; George Washington suffered along side his men. Afterwards, they were not going to let him down.

On Christmas Eve Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River and defeated the Germans camped there. Later Washington asked one of his officers, "Why did they follow me into battle even though we have been defeated in the past?" The answer was simple and straight forward, "They love you sir and would follow you to their death bed."

Suffering with the troops pulled everyone together. They became one unit, one family, one man. No one was different. No one was better than. Everyone was in it together. Suffering with the troops is powerful!

Lee Iacocca did the same. He said "I will only take \$1 a year until the company is making a profit. This galvanized all the employees to help turn the company around. As you know, it worked. Chrysler, which was on the verge of bankruptcy, turned around and became a profitable company which is still making a profit.

Not suffering with the troops has led to many revolutions. When the people see that they are suffering and no one at the top is losing anything, instead they are gaining, the people become discontent. This is a de-motivating factor which will lead to people abandoning the company and even fighting against it.

## **FIGHT ONLY WHEN NECESSARY**

Many in business and in government need to learn this lesson. Too many today try to conquer new territories by force. Before the company decides to conquer by force they should consider peace with companies in the new territory, a partnership or joint venture.

All the best leaders have offered peace and a union with them. If the other party refused the offer of peace, then they fought, but if they accepted the peace, then they worked together.

Could this work in business? Of course it could work, as long as greed or power is not the motivating force in the company. The outcome would be more prosperity for all.

Alexander offered peace to every town. If they accepted, they were considered as one with Alexander's people. They had all the same rights as the rest of his people. This made them loyal to him. It also created one the largest armies the world had seen.

As far as how well you fight when you have to, that is strategy which is a different training session.

## **STRONG PERSONALITY**

Charisma, you must be a person the people will listen to and want to listen to. You have to be good with the people. There are many brilliant men and women in the world but they can not accomplish their goals because they lack the charisma to get people to work with them. And even when they are somewhat charismatic they still lack another essential part.

Another part of strong personality is conviction. You must have the conviction that you are right and stand up for it. You must have conviction that the vision you have for the company is the best way to go and stand up for it. You can not vacillate.

There are many people who are 'likable' but they lack the conviction and so people do not follow them. Then you have people who have conviction but no charisma and they are just obnoxious. They irritate you and they sound pushy.

Charisma and conviction combined give you a strong personality. The leader must have a strong personality to get the people to follow him into battle and possible death. Today, in business, there is not much of the physical death, but there is still a kind of death that is possible, career death. The leader has to be able to take you into the battle, into unknown territories and lead you out the other side in victory.

Every time that a leader has lacked the charisma to make people listen and the conviction to make them believe in him, he has lost his power to lead. You see it throughout history; a person rises to power only to fall shortly thereafter, but when you have a person who is charismatic and full of conviction, even if he is thrown in jail the people still follow him. Look at Nelson Mandela.

Usually it has been a combination of the attitudes and skills which cause the fall, but if he could have kept the strong personality he may have had the opportunity to stay in power longer and perhaps change.

## **TAKING RISKS**

The last of our major attitudes is risk. Let's face it; most people do not like change. They will do anything to keep from changing, but the leader sees change as necessary at times. The leader will take the risk so that all may benefit. He sees that the path they are on is a dead end, but if they go to a new area they may live.

There is always the possibility of failure, but the leader does not see failure as failure, he sees it as a learning lesson. He also has looked closely at the situation and he knows that there is a 'good' chance that they will win. It is a calculated risk.

I guess you might say that risk taking has to do with courage; the courage to go ahead when everyone else wants to go back, but not a blind reckless courage. The leader has a calculated courage.

## **Skills**

I am sure that enough has been said about the skills list. I do not need to explain them. I do not believe that I use them any differently than any other training consultant.

## **Conclusion**

You have seen that The Essential 10 are the key points which separate the leaders from businessman or manager. There is another very important factor, responsibility. The person must be willing to take responsibility for his actions and the for the other people as well.

Responsibility is usually the big divider. I have trained many and when it came down to taking full responsibility, 30% would stop there. They wanted to be leaders, but they did not want to take responsibility for everyone and everything. As I explain, your decisions will affect the lives of hundreds, thousands or possibly millions of people, are you ready to take that responsibility?

You can train them, but you can not force them to take the responsibility for everyone. This will be your hardest decision. As the company owner or stakeholders, you must decide whether the person will be responsible or not. I can teach him the skills. I can help him develop the attitudes and fine tune the skills, but I can not make you decision for you as to whether he is the right person to lead the company, that is your duty.