

How to Become a Great Leader

By Jack Doxey

When I sat down at my computer to write this article my mind floated back to my years as a young man in New York City. I was working my way through college. It was in the early 1950s and I had many jobs while trying to earn my degree.

I worked for bosses. A boss in those days was, for the most part, stern, suspicious and argumentative. But most of all they were highly directive. You received instructions in the morning and you made every attempt to carry them out to the letter of the law. You never determined, on your own part, as to how the job was to be carried out.

Your boss would not trust you and constantly inspected and corrected your work throughout the day. I remember working with a book publisher on Long Island. When the employees needed to use the rest room the boss was right behind the employees and would stand outside and time them. If, in his opinion, you were taking too long he would pound on the door and tell you to hurry up and get back to work. Not all bosses acted this way. I do believe that good Leadership did exist in those days but let me assure you, from my experience, it was in short supply. Things have improved and as we begin the new millennium we do have some excellent Leaders.

Here are some traits of well functioning Leaders:

Visionary:

They have a well articulated idea of what the organization will look like in the future. A Leader has the (necessary) charisma so their people join them and get excited about the Vision. In other words; they have followers in the good sense of the word.

Buy In:

They can "paint mental pictures" for their people that motivate them to join in on the vision - not in a tepid way but at the same level as their Leader. The truly gifted Leader involves his/her people in the actual drafting of the Vision.

Constant Learning:

The enlightened Leader loves the idea of exploring new avenues and learning new ways to accomplish things. The whole idea of constant learning is not just for themselves but also for their people. They create an environment that encourages and rewards constant learning.



Empowerment:

Effective Leaders encourage people to use their own creative ability to get the job done. They trust their people and encourage them to take chances and try new approaches. They don't hold it against them if, from time to time, they fail in their attempt to reach their goals. At times the Leader provides encouragement and guided autonomy. However, invariably, the people come away with the conviction that they did it themselves.

If the organization you work with has excellent Leaders at the top, it will certainly position you to be successful. However that is not enough.

In order to accomplish the challenging goals we set for ourselves and our organizations we must have Leaders throughout the entire organization. Are you one of those Leaders? If not, why not step up to the plate and become one. Begin to study and emulate the traits and concepts of a good Leader and set a goal to be recognized as a Leader.

It will help your professional growth and in the process help your organization meet the challenges in this year and beyond.