



LEADERSHIP – A QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE WITHIN

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ABSTRACT

A leader is a person who influences group of people towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership means different things to different people.

Leadership skills can be acquired, honed and executed. Leaders should ignite and inspire the follower to innovate and instil high level of integrity. Leaders should have a balance mind to guide the followers to take decisions. Leaders should leave legacy ad imprints in the minds of a follower.

KEYWORDS : Leadership, Skills, Excellence

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal. A leader is a person who knowingly or unknowingly has taken the destiny of a few people into his hands. Whoever is willing to take responsibility for one more life is a leader. Leaders don't fall from the sky. Leaders are rarely born. Circumstances and persistence are major components in the developmental process of a leader.

Leadership is a skill, not a genetic trait inherited by a lucky few. Leadership is a powerful enabler that can leverage an individual to great heights, fame and a credible position. Leadership means different things to different people around the world, and different things in different situations. We can find people in leadership roles in every walk of life.

Over the past several years, psychology has focused on many important contributions to determine the key traits of acknowledged leaders.

Can the ability to touch and inspire people be learnt?

Yes----Leadership skills can be acquired, honed and executed.

- **Ignite yourself**

Know Thyself. Becoming a leader is synonymous with knowing yourself. Some may even think of it as selfish. Yet, we can activate the best in others only when we activate the best in ourselves. You cannot inspire unless you are inspired. The Bhagavad Gita suggests that leaders cannot lead effectively unless they know their own selves.

- **Inner balance:**

If you want to have the privilege of being a leader in any sphere of life, you must have the inner balance and be joyful. So it is very important to be in the best of emotions within oneself all the time because everything that you do affects so many people. Directing attention or greater focus towards where it needs to go is a primary task of leadership. Leaders need to have a proper balance of physical and mental activities.

- **Insight:**

Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do. Leaders must have insight into situations, into problems and possible solutions.

- **Integrity**

Integrity is one of the top attributes of a great leader. It is choosing the right thing for the right reason regardless of the circumstances. Every human being is born with a conscience and therefore the ability to

know right from wrong. It is a key element in building trust, without which a person cannot be leader. It is about the coherence between what you say, do and think. It is in your actions, in the way you are, the way you carry yourself. People are more loyal and enthusiastic when they work in an environment run by people they trust.

- **Inspire**

Leading and living by example is not as hard as it might sound. It is the easiest way to inspire the followers. Showing the way by doing it yourself. A Great leader like Mahatma Gandhi lived life the way he preached. As a leader you need to bring out the best in each and everyone. Leader gives his support to others so that they may have the strength to stand on their own. Leadership is about influence, guidance, and support, not control. Leadership is all about encouraging the potential, reinforcing optimism, & communicating with passion. Listening is a very powerful tool in the art of leadership. In order to be a good listener you need to listen - with your ears, eyes and heart.

"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one who gets the people to do the greatest things"- Ronald Reagan

- **Innovate:**

A leader should be innovative and creative. He should motivate the people to bring out their creativity so that they can survive in demanding circumstances. Creativity is one of the hardest leadership competencies to master. Creative leaders have the ability to re-think, are open-minded and inventive.

- **Intelligence**

Means the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. The cognitive intelligence (IQ) will help a leader to assemble relevant data, analyse and make the right decision. But it's a challenge if as a brilliant thinker, he has difficulty in understanding how to connect with people at the emotional level. So it is important for great leaders to work, with both their head and heart. There are various elements of emotional intelligence in leadership. When in a leadership position one needs to have a clear picture of strengths and weakness and also to behave with humility. A leader should be flexible and committed to personal accountability. As a leader if you want to earn the respect and loyalty of your team then you need to show that you care by being empathetic. Social intelligence is required for a leader to have good social skills and to manage change and resolve conflicts diplomatically.

- **Inquisitiveness**

Leaders should always look for new ideas, insights and information. Great leaders are inquisitive explorers. Most successful leaders are very curious people. They are interested in the things around them and that contributes to their vision. An inquisitive leader spends a great deal of time creating a natural sense of unity. They are relationship builders who firmly believe in the power

behind personal honesty and trustworthiness. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said "As long as I live, so long do I learn."

In Srimad Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna describes leader as:

*yadyadācaratiśreṣṭhastat tad evetarajanaḥ
sayatpramāṇamkurutelokas tad anuvartate 3.21*

"Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues".

Leader should leave a legacy and an imprint in the minds of a follower. Leadership is not about title, position but its all about RESPONSIBILITY. Let us all be the LEADERS WHO WALK THE TALK.