

Leadership Beyond



Leadership, to extract its true essence must be Leadership Beyond. Something that is beyond mere good intentions, limits, excuses, fantasies, etc. It has to be real in order to be effective and purposeful. Leadership involves clear vision and strong perseverance. A leader is one who inspires change, ignites talent and lifts others to greatness. When it is said that leaders are born, does it not sound as a statement by someone who has given up on one's development? A far real statement is that leaders are also made. The progress lies in our hand. Choice is ours. So what do we have to wait for? To be reborn as a leader or to develop oneself into a leader in this life itself! Good leaders are 'made', not born. The only requisite is to have the desire and willpower and one can become an effective leader. A good leader develops through a perpetual process of self-study, education, training, experience and keeps away from resting on their laurels. Read on to explore more.



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The common thought what emerges out of our mind about a leader is a person who leads a group of persons on front, through a struggle or problem and takes the group towards a set goal. It may sound so simple to describe, but usually not so in practice. The leader is an overall strategist and executer of the plan to an objective. In the process, the leader is challenged to demonstrate various capabilities form which together, the traits of leadership. These can be summarised here as under, though not exhaustive.

Confidence -A leader has tremendous confidence in himself. The confidence is not an academic

term which can be read, practiced and possessed. It involves knowing oneself, one's strengths and weaknesses. The knowledge of one's self comes through introspection into self and awareness of one's actions all along, not as an occasional practice, but as a natural way of life. One, who knows self, knows others well too.

Initiation- A leader always exerts himself beyond ordinary ones. Always tries to take those steps to achieve an objective which, in common parlance, are termed as extra, but are very essential for any achievement. Initiation should not be confused with meaning-

less restlessness to keep doing something. It should be understood correctly as an on-going purposive effort for a set goal.

Commitment- One cannot commit to anything without knowing or understanding it fully at heart and being convinced of its rationale without an iota of doubt. Also, commitment is a property of a stable mind. A wavering mind seldom demonstrates commitment. Self-confidence improves one's commitment. Commitment is beyond mind. It has more to do with one's heart than one's sole mind. So when the process of conviction reaches one's heart through one's mind, the sense of commitment deepens. A leader has tremendous harmony between his mind and heart where normally others lack in.

Focus- Self-confidence and commitment keep a leader focused on the goal.

Maturity- Maturity resides in a mind with grown and developed faculties. It is also converse of fickle mindedness and impatience. With a stable and convinced mind, a leader has superior maturity levels than ordinary masses. Maturity reflects patience to think and allow events to unfold naturally before one decides to act. It involves knowledge to deal with a matter squarely on merits without prejudice. Prejudices colour our decisions and we get swayed to unnecessary events.

Empowerment & Delegation- A leader never believes in doing everything self. A leader always believes in the empowerment of team members largely. A leader knows well how to harmonise his efforts with those of his team members. Maturity and patience help a leader work with a team better than any other.



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who has given up on one's development? A far real statement is that leaders are also made. Who makes a leader? None other than the leader himself. The progress lies in our hand. Choice is ours. So what do we have to wait for? To be reborn as a leader or develop self into a leader in this life itself! Look beyond and transform yourself into a leader with good leadership in serving those who are led rather merely viewing self as elevated above them. As such perspective erodes the respect of the one being led. ☺☺

Team-engagement- A leader knows well that for any team to be successful, it is essential that the team members understand the goal, commit themselves to the goal and take ownership of the goal objectives. It can be brought in only by involving them in the whole process where they get a sense of ownership of the process, right from the goal formulation, related decision making till their accomplishments. A seasoned leader desists from imposition of any sort and never dominates.

Responsibility- A leader never blames anyone for even composite failures and takes complete responsibility of failures. He knows that more than blaming someone in the process, what is more important is introspection into the events and finding out the causes of failures and act quickly to accomplish the objectives. He never loses sight of the goals. All other things are secondary. A leader always finds

credit for success unimportant against the lessons of failure or possible future improvements in the so called success.

A 'Leader' is a clear visionary and has a strong perseverance. We can continue discussing the merits of a leader and the list is endless. There are many leadership philosophies, styles, approaches and traits which make one feel that leadership is no common practice. Let us try to know what really makes a leader so distinguished. Is it his resolve and ability to grow and make his team-mates capable of setting objectives and achieving them their own, which brings this distinction? If we minutely examine this, we find there are certain simple traits as laid down below, which make an individual a distinct leader.

Collective Thinking- A leader always encourages his team mates to think on various aspects of a subject matter. He may add a perspective to it based upon his knowledge, but does not limit the horizon or process to his knowledge alone and prods the team mates to think holistically beyond and evolve a better and refined approach. A leader understands well the collective power of human minds *vis-à-vis* a single human mind. He tries helping minds of his team-mates break their barriers and flow free for higher thoughts and solutions.

Simple Approach- A leader always leads by an example. In fact, that is how he evolves into a leader. A leader is always simple, not only by nature, but in approach too. We all know that simple solutions touch our heart straight. Simple approaches can be easily practiced and bring in quick results. So he does not adopt simplicity because of its austere or moral significance, but due to its enormous benefits it brings to the team in terms of

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understanding, harmony and ease of practice. Simplicity is really most uncommon in us.

Focus on Result and Time-A leader follows efficiency and effectiveness. He takes all measures to ensure that solutions and approaches are efficient and effective. He is result oriented. He modularises the whole process of goal accomplishment into smaller sub-sets of achievable goals which can be clearly delegated to team-mates and monitored for their measurable results. He sets a culture of goal prioritisation and result-oriented time management for maximum results. He emphasises and practices thoughtfulness and purposefulness in every action team undertakes. After all, he knows that if team actions are not thoughtful and purposeful, results will never be delightful.

Pursuit for Excellence - A leader always aspires for excellence at work, but is matured enough not to expect it the first time. He knows that excellence is a result of continuous skill and self development. He is keen on observing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of his team members. He works hard to develop the strengths of his team members further into an expertise of excellence. He knows well that the quality of accomplishment of set goals and his leadership squarely depends on the expertise

he builds and grounds within his team members.

Commonness- A leader is highly common in his thought process and approach. Commonness is a highly confused term. We have given it a meaning of lesser importance such that what is common has no quality or uniqueness. All of us want to be distinct and unique, and in this quest, try to do weird things which have least utility and benefits to others. Normally, we are unmindful in our actions and do not care for others. How often we think before our actions and their impact on others? A leader always thinks of the impact of his action on others. Above all, being common is a virtue whereby one easily connects with masses and enlists their support. Just imagine that if a leader always tries to be different from his team-mates, what disastrous team efforts will emerge out of his efforts. A team spirit does not denote an official consensus, but a common conviction at the heart of all on a matter. This will not be possible without being common with the team-mates.

Independence of Thoughts- A leader is never prejudiced. One would be prejudiced if one has a great liking for a particular viewpoint or approach which negates opportunities to see greater merits. A leader is highly past-neutral but the merit does not lie in that alone. A leader has the ability to float his mind freely with the merits of any matter and settle with the best out of them. This allows a leader to see things clearly through the eyes of others as they intend, without losing his individual identity and judgment. A leader uses his mind more as a processor than a reservoir of ideas.

Positivism- A leader is highly positive. Positivism should not be

confused with idealism or simply looking for merits in everything; even demerits. Being positive requires applying one's experience practically and logically. If a matter meets rejection, it surely requires our knowledge and experience to be revised or upgraded to judge if it's practical and logical. Despite that, if that matter remains impractical and illogical, we can not be really positive to it naturally as that shall be a forced imposition on our mind and heart which will reverse its impact at the earliest opportunity if those have not accepted it anyway. A leader knows this fact and does not expect positivism beyond its meaning. A leader always looks for merits in all aspects he deals with and acts on their relative advantages. Above that, the leader uses positivism as a capability to turn a demerit into a merit failing which at least he finds beneficial applications of those demerits for team benefits.

Positivism also involves interpreting and pointing out the unintended merits of team-mates' efforts and approaches and encourages them to act on them in alignment of the intended goals. It is a tremendous virtue to see and interpret merits of others

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and encourage them to act better towards their goals. It builds on the team understanding, cohesion and purposive-ness.

A Contributor- A leader never deplores the bad results of his team. He suggests better future alternatives and sets a healthy debate. He puts alternatives and thereby prods team-mates to excel them. He always desists to formulate the approaches himself and makes it a team process. He interprets and converts low merit approaches of his team-mates into high merit ones, giving them the sense of ownership rather than owning them self.

Informal- A leader is an excellent blend of formality and informality. He is close to all the team members informally on their meritorious efforts and decisions, but knows well to infuse a sense of common unease when those efforts and decisions lack merits, setting the pitch for immediate discussion and improvement.

Inclusiveness- A leader seldom expresses an opinion of himself. He believes in evolving an opinion though inclusive discussions and avoids all efforts and actions which reflect sheer individual dominance and promotes team togetherness.

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He believes in his best efforts, but is seasoned well not to bemoan adverse results. He has the ability to absorb the adverse effects equally sportingly.

Now, how often do we come across a person possessing these virtues of a leader? The problem lies here. We always want a packaged ideal solution. We have been told to be ideal since birth and keep seeking that in our every endeavour. Should we not admit that we are not ideal as per our social definition and nor we can be? So why waste efforts trying being something we are not prepared for. We are extroverts and normally look outwards for a solution, whereas most often it lies within. We look for a leader to lead us to our intended results. We always want service from outside. Self-service pains us. Someone

else must serve us to our comfort. Are we realistic in our approach? Should we not end this and accept reality? Should we not look inwards within ourselves and with whatever strengths we have, begin to lead ourselves? There is nothing which an individual cannot cultivate within if one has the hunger for it. We have not understood ourselves. If we do, we will begin to be a self-leader gradually. If this process of self-development is continued sincerely, each one of us shall be a leader in one's own right.

We must realise and recognise that the virtues flow from our hearts and not from our minds. We can feign a virtue, but that shall be temporary. It will not last longer as we may not be well convinced, experienced, and practiced into it. We will do a great disservice to ourself by imitating a virtue of a leader. Let's not deceive ourselves by trying to be someone we have not prepared ourselves to be. Let us understand and accept our realities which are the core of our self-development. If we are real to ourselves, there is hope that we will improve ourselves. Not necessarily! Realisation alone is not enough. We must work for results.

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