

Excerpt from:

Leading During Rapid Change

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"To lead people, walk beside them. As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate. When the best leader's work is done the people say, We did it ourselves!"

Lao Tzu

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

Leon C. Megginson¹

"Humanity does not ask us to be happy. It merely asks us to be brilliant on its behalf. Survival first, then happiness as we can manage it."

From Ender's Game

¹ Normally attributed to Charles Darwin. Actually, It apparently was not said or written by him. "The earliest relevant evidence known to QI appeared in a speech delivered in 1963 by a Louisiana State University business professor named Leon C. Megginson at the convention of the Southwestern Social Science Association. The text of his address was published in the quarterly journal of the association. Megginson presented his own idiosyncratic interpretation of the central idea outlined in Darwin's "On the Origin of Species". Megginson did not use quotation marks, and the phrasing was somewhat repetitive. Boldface has been added to excerpts:

" Yes, change is the basic law of nature. But the changes wrought by the passage of time affects individuals and institutions in different ways. According to Darwin's Origin of Species, it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. Applying this theoretical concept to us as individuals, we can state that the civilization that is able to survive is the one that is able to adapt to the changing physical, social, political, moral, and spiritual environment in which it finds itself."

<http://quoteinvestigator.com/2014/05/04/adapt/>

1. Leadership Traits and Principles²

INTRODUCTION

"Leadership is intangible, hard to measure, and difficult to describe. Its quality would seem to stem from many factors. But certainly they must include a measure of inherent ability to control and direct, self-confidence based on expert knowledge, initiative, loyalty, pride and sense of responsibility. Inherent ability cannot be instilled, but that which is latent or dormant can be developed. Other ingredients can be acquired. They are not easily learned. But leaders can be and are made."

General C. B. Cates,
19th Commandant of the Marine Corps

14 leadership Traits

Justice

Definition - Giving reward and punishment according to the merits of the case in question. The ability to administer a system of rewards and punishments impartially and consistently.

Significance - The quality of displaying fairness and impartiality is critical in order to gain the trust and respect of people and maintains discipline and unit cohesion, particularly in the exercise of responsibility.

Example - Fair apportionment of tasks by a team leader.

Judgment

Definition - The ability to weigh facts and possible courses of action in order to make sound decisions.

Significance - Sound judgment allows a leader to make appropriate decisions in the guidance and training of his/her people and the employment of his/her team or organization. A person who exercises good judgment weighs pros and cons when making appropriate decisions.

Example - A Person properly apportions his/her free time in order to relax as well as to study.

Dependability

Definition - The certainty of proper performance of responsibilities.

Significance - The quality that permits a senior to assign a task to a junior with the understanding that it will be accomplished satisfactorily with minimum supervision within a proper time frame.

Example - The team leader ensures that his/her team is prepared for its meetings.

Initiative

Definition - Taking action in the absence of direction by another.

Significance - Since a person often works without close supervision; emphasis is placed on being a self-starter.

Example - In the unexplained absence of the person chairing a meeting, a person takes on facilitating the meeting and carries out the agenda.

Decisiveness

Definition - Ability to make decisions promptly and articulate them in a clear, authoritative manner.

Significance - The quality of character which guides a person to accumulate all necessary, available facts in a circumstance, evaluate the facts in context, and choose a plan of action. It is often better that a good decision be made promptly than a potentially better decision be made at the expense of more time.

Example - A leader, who sees a potentially dangerous situation developing, immediately takes action to prevent injury from occurring.

Tact

Definition - The ability to deal with others in a manner that will maintain good relations by doing the right thing at the right time.

Significance - The quality of consistently treating people with respect and courtesy. Tact allows decisions, guidance, and opinions to be expressed in a constructive manner. This deference must be extended under all conditions regardless of your true feelings.

Example - A team member discreetly points out a procedural mistake to a team leader by waiting until after the meeting has ended and privately asking which procedure is correct.

Integrity

Definition - Uprightness of character and soundness of moral principles. The quality of truthfulness and honesty.

Significance - A person's word is his/her bond. Nothing less than complete honesty in dealings with people is acceptable.

Example - A Person who uses the correct more laborious technique on a task, even when he/she cannot be seen by the evaluator.

Enthusiasm

Definition - The display of sincere interest and exuberance in performance.

Significance - Displaying interest in a task and optimism that it can be successfully completed greatly enhances the likelihood that the task will be successfully accomplished.

Example - A person who offers personal assistance with a task that is giving a peer great difficulty. Encouraging others to pull together.

Bearing

Definition - Creating a favorable impression in carriage, appearance, and personal conduct at all times.

Significance - The ability to look, talk, and act like a leader whether or not these manifestations indicate one's true feelings.

Example - Wearing appropriate clothing for the situation, respecting local customs, or being respectful to them. Refraining from profane and vulgar language..

Unselfishness

Definition - Avoidance of providing for one's own comfort and personal advancement at the expense of others.

Significance - The quality of looking out for the needs of others before your own is the essence of leadership. This quality should never come into conflict with the successful accomplishment of the mission.

Example - A leader ensures all members of his/her team have eaten before he/she does, or if water is scarce, he/she will share what he/she has and ensure that others do the same.

Courage

Definition - Courage is a mental quality that recognizes fear of danger or criticism, but enables a person to proceed with calmness and firmness anyway.

Significance - Knowing and standing up for what is right, even in the face of popular disfavor. The business of addressing contentious situations can be personally and professionally dangerous. The importance of courage in those situations is a requirement of leadership.

Example - Accepting criticism for making people work for extra hours to get the job done correctly.

Knowledge

Definition - Understanding of a science or an art. The range of one's information, including professional knowledge and understanding of the context and your people's primary disciplines.

Significance - The gaining and retention of current developments in your field, local, regional and world affairs is important for your growth and development as a leader.

Example - The person who not only knows how to maintain and operate his/her personal task, but also understands and can complete other team tasks.

Loyalty

Definition - The quality of faithfulness to team members and the organization.

Significance - A team member owes loyalty up and down the chain of operations.

Example - A person carrying out the decision of a leader, though he/she may privately disagree with it.

Endurance

Definition - The mental and physical stamina measured by the ability to withstand physical, mental and emotional hardship.

Significance - The quality of withstanding stress & fatigue is crucial for a leader.

Example - A leader keeping up with the team during an emergency, even through extreme mental and physical fatigue.

11 LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Know Yourself and Seek Self Improvement

- This principle of leadership should be developed through the use of leadership traits. Evaluate yourself by using the leadership traits and determine your strengths and weaknesses.
- You can improve yourself in many ways. To develop the techniques of this principle:
 - Make an honest personal evaluation to determine strong and weak personal qualities

- Seek the honest opinions of friends and superiors
- Learn by studying the causes for success and failures of others
- Develop a genuine interest in people
- Master the art of effective writing and speech
- Have a definite plan to achieve your goal

Be Technically and Tactically Proficient

- Strive to be a person who knows their job thoroughly and possesses a wide field of knowledge. Before you can lead, you must be able to do the job. Tactical and technical competence can be learned from static sources and from on the job training. To develop this leadership principle of being technically and tactically proficient, you should:
 - Know what is expected of you and expend time and energy on becoming proficient at those tasks
 - Form an attitude early on of seeking to learn more than is necessary
 - Observe and study the actions of capable leaders
 - Spend time with those people who are recognized as technically and tactically proficient at those things
 - Prepare yourself for the leadership position above yours
 - Seek feedback

Know Your People and Look Out For Their Welfare

- This is one of the most important leadership principles. A leader must make a conscientious effort to observe his/her people and how they react in different situations. A person who is nervous and lacks self-confidence should never be put in a situation where important decisions must be made in a timely manner. This knowledge will enable you as the leader, to determine when close supervision is required.
- To put this principle in to practice successfully you should:
 - Put your people's welfare before your own
 - Be approachable
 - Encourage individual development
 - Know your group's mental attitude; keep in touch with their thoughts
 - Ensure fair and equal distribution of rewards
 - Provide sufficient recreational time and insist on participation

Keep Your Personnel Informed

- People are by nature are inquisitive. To promote efficiency and morale, a leader should inform his/her people of situational details when appropriate, and reasons actions are taken. Informing your people of the situation makes them feel that they are a part of the team and not just a cog in a wheel. Informed people perform better.

- The key to providing information is to ensure a person has enough information to do their job intelligently and to inspire their initiative, enthusiasm, loyalty, and conviction.
- Techniques to apply this principle are:
 - Whenever possible, explain why tasks must be done and the plan to accomplish a task
 - Be alert to detect the spread of rumors. Stop rumors by replacing them with the truth
 - Build morale and esprit de corps by publicizing information concerning successes of your people

Set The Example

- A leader who shows professional competence, courage and integrity sets high personal standards for him/her self before he/she can rightfully demand it from others. Your appearance, attitude and personal example are on display daily for people.
- Techniques for setting the example are to:
 - Show your people that you are willing to do the same things you ask them to do
 - Maintain an optimistic outlook
 - Conduct yourself so that your personal habits are not open to criticism
 - Avoid showing favoritism to any of your people
 - Delegate authority and avoid over supervision in order to develop leadership among your people
 - Leadership is taught by example

Ensure The Task Is Understood, Supervised, and Accomplished

- Leaders must give clear, concise direction that cannot be misunderstood, and then by close supervision, ensure that the direction is properly executed. Before you can expect your people to perform, they must know what is expected of them.
- The most important part of this principle is the accomplishment of the mission. In order to develop this principle you should:
 - Issue every direction as if it were your own
 - Use the established chain of command in your organization, if there is one
 - Encourage people to ask questions concerning any point in your directions or directives they do not understand
 - Question people to determine if there is any doubt or misunderstanding in regard to the task to be accomplished
 - Supervise the execution of the task
 - Exercise care and thought in supervision; over supervision will hurt initiative and create resentment, while under supervision will not get the job done

Train Your People As A Team

- Teamwork is the key to successful operations. Teamwork is essential from the smallest group to the largest community. As a leader, you must insist on teamwork from your people. Plan, organize and execute as a team. Be sure that each person knows his/her position and responsibilities within the team framework.
- To develop the techniques of this principle you should:
 - Stay sharp by continuously studying and training
 - Do not publicly blame an individual for the team's failure or praise just an individual for the team's success
 - Ensure that training is meaningful, and that the purpose is clear to all members of the team
 - Train your team based on realistic conditions
 - Insist that every person understands the functions of the other members of the team and the function of the team as part of the whole

Make Sound And Timely Decisions

- The leader must be able to rapidly estimate a situation and make a sound decision based on that estimation. Hesitation or a reluctance to make a decision leads people to lose confidence in your abilities as a leader. Loss of confidence in turn creates confusion and hesitation within the group.
- Techniques to develop this principle include:
 - Developing a logical and orderly thought process by practicing
 - When time and situations permit, planning for every possible event that can reasonably be foreseen
 - Considering the advice and suggestions of your people before making decisions
 - Considering the effects of your decisions on all members of your group

Develop A Sense Of Responsibility Among Your People

- Another way to show your people you are interested in their welfare is to give them the opportunity for professional development. Assigning tasks and delegating authority promotes mutual confidence and respect between leader and his/her people. It also encourages people to exercise initiative and to give wholehearted cooperation in accomplishment of group tasks. When you properly delegate authority, you demonstrate faith in your people and increase their desire for greater responsibilities.
- To develop this principle you should:
 - Operate through the chain of command during an emergency.
 - Provide clear, well thought out directions
 - Give your people frequent opportunities to perform tasks normally performed by more senior personnel
 - Be quick to recognize your people's accomplishments when they demonstrate initiative and resourcefulness

- Correct errors in judgment and initiative in a way which will encourage the individual to try harder
- Give advice and assistance freely when your people request it
- Resist the urge to micro manage
- Be prompt and fair in backing your people's decisions and acts
- Accept responsibility willingly and insist that your people live by the same standard

Lead Within your Group's Capabilities

- A leader must have a thorough knowledge of the tactical and technical capabilities of the group or organization. Successful completion of a task depends upon how well you know your people's capabilities. If the task assigned is one they have not been trained to do, failure is likely to occur. Failures lower morale and self esteem.
- Techniques for development of this principle are to:
 - Avoid volunteering people for tasks that are beyond their capabilities
 - Be sure that tasks assigned are reasonable
 - Assign tasks equally among your people
 - Use the full capabilities of your group before requesting outside assistance

Seek Responsibilities and Take Responsibility

- For professional development, you must actively seek out challenging tasks. You must use initiative and sound judgment when trying to accomplish jobs. Seeking responsibilities also means that you take responsibility for your actions. Regardless of the actions of your people, the responsibility for all decisions and their application falls on you.
- Techniques in developing this principle are to:
 - Learn the duties of your immediate leader, and be prepared to accept the responsibilities of these duties
 - Seek a variety of leadership positions that will give you experience in accepting responsibility in different fields
 - Take every opportunity that offers increased responsibility
 - Perform every task, no matter how seemingly trivial, to the best of your ability
 - Stand up for what you think is right. Have courage in your convictions
 - Carefully evaluate a person's failure before taking action about that person.
 - In the absence of direction, take the initiative to perform the actions you believe your leader would direct you to perform, if present