

# November 2007, Becoming an Extraordinary Leader

In his book "What Made Jack Welch: How Ordinary People Become Extraordinary Leaders," Stephen Baum puts forth the idea that a person's leadership core is nurtured and grown out of shaping experiences encountered and pursued throughout life. He identifies ten shaping experiences that mold people into leaders, developing their leadership traits and providing the knowledge and skills crucial to operating in a highly effective manner. It isn't just one of them that provides the skill, talent, inherent ability, or single moment of inspiration that makes a leader. Rather, great leadership happens through hard work and a willingness to take on experience and learn from it.

- 1. Swim in Water over Your Head.** Take a calculated personal risk without specific knowledge of how to succeed.
- 2. Make the Tough Choice.** Choose group benefit over personal interest, or choose between two "rights."
- 3. Solve the Key Puzzle.** Even if it is not your job, figure out the root of the problem or opportunity.
- 4. Parent at Work.** Help others to grow and to perform exceptionally.
- 5. Sell Something/Get Others to Buy In.** Win hearts and minds to create followers.
- 6. Connect with Others.** Understand what motivates others - walk the talk and speak their language. Enlist them as much by your deeds as by your words.
- 7. Build a Team.** Gather and lead a group in a common endeavor, and succeed. Or fail at first and try again. Get average players to play like stars. Add new members and weed out underperformers. Set direction and change it while keeping the team together.
- 8. Get Good on Your Feet.** Learn to communicate, dialogue, and project your authenticity in real time.
- 9. Develop Your Crap Detector.** Practice your intuitive ability to read subtexts of conversations and to detect individuals whose words and behaviors are not what they pretend them to be.
- 10. Look in the Mirror.** Assess your own values, beliefs, and behaviors critically.