

10 Steps to Effective Leadership

Leadership is not just about having a title. Every person, in any given situation, is a leader of something. While you may not have the prestige or salary that goes with being the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, each one of us carries some leadership responsibilities, however small they may be. Whether you're at the top, working to get there, or simply being successful where you are, there are several aspects of your own personal development that must be achieved in order to be effective as a leader at any level. To that end, John C. Maxwell, an internationally respected leadership expert, speaker, and author provides 10 steps to help in the journey.

Convictions that are stronger than fears.

Leaders overcome their fears. This may be fear of trying something new or fear of standing up to what you know is right. Most everyone has convictions but many are too timid to stand up when those convictions are challenged.

Vision that is clearer than doubt.

A leader must be able to see where they are now, and look ahead to where they strive to be. While any vision comes with doubt, the doubt cannot be paralyzing to achieving the vision.

Spiritual sensitivity that is louder than popular opinion.

Many people try to check their spirituality at the door when it comes to work and leadership, when in actuality they are inseparable. Spirituality is the core of who you are and spiritual strength is essential to establishing a firm moral foundation that cannot be blown over or easily toppled.

Self-esteem that is deeper than self-protection.

Protecting oneself from outside forces is natural. But sometimes people allow that to come at the expense of their own self-esteem. Leaders must stand out and, by doing so, put themselves in a vulnerable position. No true leader ever succeeded under a roof of self-protection.

Appreciation for discipline that is greater than a desire for leisure.

Greatness can rarely be achieved without self-discipline. We all want and need leisure time, but those who stand above others are willing to sacrifice some of their leisure time for those things that help them grow mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Dissatisfaction that is more forceful than the status quo.

Contentment helps us learn to survive and be happy with what we have while dissatisfaction helps propel us forward to better things that we know can be achieved. While we cannot live in a state of unhappy dissatisfaction, we can use that dissatisfaction to grow our measure of success.

Poise that is more unshakable than panic.

While any leader may become worried or distressed, how they handle those situations says a lot about them. Keeping cool under pressure produces a calmness that spreads within an organization, allowing everybody to think with a clear head.

Risk-taking that is stronger than safety-keeping.

There is no safety in standing up or stepping out when everybody else is just sitting around. There are very few profitable investments that don't require some measure of risk. True leaders understand that risk is a part of the job.

Actions that are more robust than rationalization.

It's possible to rationalize your way out of anything, but rationalizations often reduce us to inaction rather than action. Nothing ever gets accomplished when we can find all the reasons not to do it rather than looking at why it needs to be done. Focus on the goals and find ways to get there, instead of reasons not to try.

A desire to see potential reached more than see people pleased.

Every person has potential for greatness. The biggest obstacle to such greatness is often those who we surround ourselves with. While we cannot put aside the needs of our friends and family for our own selfish ambitions, we cannot please everybody all of the time.