

Chapter 7 - THINK AND GROW LIKE A LEADER

Quality leaders are like magnets; they attract the best people
– Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

I would like to begin this chapter with an excellent quote from Robin Sharma "The deeper your relationship with others, the more effective will be your leadership. People will not follow you if they do not trust you, and before someone will lend you a hand, you must first touch their hearts." I am in total agreement with this; as a leader, you are the ones who help yourself and others to do the right things. You envision the future and set the direction to build an ambitious vision for the people who follow you and to the organization you work. You must ensure that the work needed to deliver the vision is properly managed – either by yourself or by a dedicated team of people to whom you delegated this responsibility – and you need to ensure that your vision gets delivered successfully.

If you are like most of the people, then your goal would be to become an excellent leader in everything you do in your community and your organizations. If you study the lives of all great leaders, you will find that all leaders started as average people, learned the leadership skills and after a period of time grew to become an outstanding leader in their organizations, in their community, in their country as well around the world. The fundamental concepts of their growth are self-development. Yes, all leaders began their journey with self-development, they would have either given a leadership position in organizations or taken a course on leadership and with years of practice and experience, they would have emerged as an excellent leader. So, the good news is leadership skills is a learnable skill which everyone can learn and master them in their lifetime to become a leader. You would probably know, "Leaders are made and not born," you don't need to be having a hereditary or DNA for becoming a leader, learning and practice make you a perfect leader.

Before you become a leader to a group of people or organization, you need first to become a leader to yourself. It is highly advisable that you start your leadership skills learning from you, during the process of learning you will come up with some ups and downs and identify a couple of drawbacks in you, which you will be able to correct along the way before you start working with others. An essential leader means that you must be able to manage few hundreds or thousands of people and you need to be an expert in managing a large group of individuals. As a leader, you will have followers. If no one is following you, listening to you, believes in you, or cares what you say, then you are not a leader, and you will be left alone. Being a leader does not mean you need to be lonely at the top, if you are leaders by position like most of the people, then you would be lonely, as positional leaders give orders to the people and maintain their position and hierarchy thinking, "I am at the top and you are at the bottom, and you report to me so you need to take orders from me." That is not the right attitude of the leaders.

You need to become a relational leader if you require to be close to the people and understand their feelings, pulse, and dreams. By being close to the people you are helping them grow along with you, so if you grow up the ladder in your organization, you need to take them along with you. Taking people to the top is what a good leader does, it becomes hard if you are a positional leader, as you get too far from the people. If you look at the great leaders in our history, you will notice that no one has got to the top alone without any followers, no leader could be successful without people helping them. Unfortunately, some individuals reach the top position and once they reach they start to push other people from the top, as they want to be the only person at the top because of they have achieved that

position with less effort and faster than expected. Once you reach the top without realizing its ability and try to push the people down, it means that they are feeling insecure and incompetent at that level. This may work for you for the time being, but will not last for a longer term. If you come to the top position so fast, then you will spend most of your time to see if there is any other person in the organization who will be doing the same thing to you, instead of focusing on how to grow yourself as a real leader. Instead, why not you give others a hand up and ask them to join you in you, and take them to the top along with you.

"Create your own visual style. let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others." – Orson Welles

To be a leader you need first to start thinking like a leader, the first and foremost aspect of becoming a leader and leading people is having a greater vision not only for you but also for other people. You need to start focusing on the mission you are driving and have a greater intent on achieving them as a team. You should establish a very high aspiration and firm purpose so that you can achieve the results you are looking to accomplish. As a leader, you will come across lots of hurdles in your duties; you will be drawn towards unusual and events which are critical which needs immediate attention from you and it will drag you to a different direction offsetting your path on completing your mission. While these significant events are all important and part of your duties, you should still not lose sight of the higher intent of your mission in your organization.

Nothing in your personal and professional life will change until you start thinking about it and making your changes. The beginning of transformation as a leader is awareness. And the very moment you are getting aware of yourself and stop to blame others or conditions for what happened, that is the time you will take back your power to alter your situation dramatically. Your personal responsibility is all about waking up to the reality that your current reality in whatever areas is most important to you that are not caused by your co-workers, boss, spouse, family, or the world. You create them via your thinking, behaviors, and performance. And once you truly get this, you will be in the beautiful position to make the new choices that will deliver all new results.

Start small, dream big but start today. Nothing happens until you act. The unfortunate reality is that procrastination is nothing more than the defense mechanism of choice used by some people. If you defined your goals, focused and acted on your visions, you would become successful, and success brings responsibility. That brings fear in most of the people like you. You start to put off getting great things done and blame the others for any mediocrity that infuses your lives.

Based on how you behave, people will be able to understand what you believe. Complaining all day long and you will reveal a deeply ingrained set of beliefs that you are powerless and apathetic. Presenting a work that has typos and poor wordings, you express a belief that being average is cool with you. Mistreating others and you will reveal that you're selfish--and disconnected from the people around you. The best part is that as you tagged in the beliefs of leadership, your character changes automatically.

One of the most critical challenges for a managerial type of leader in the organization is to learn how to survive amid a group that does not truly want to change. You didn't create the mess that the company is in, nor are you the one determining where to go from here. However, you are held responsible for following the new plans, whether you agree with them or not and in such situation, your attitude becomes more critical to the success of the new order. It makes your life more difficult where you need to adjust yourselves to the management and as well lead the team as if there is no mess

around you and take the team to the next level of success by bringing the productivity up, prove to the upper management that their strategy works. You need to bring your leadership skills in this situation to make everything set right. If you are the only person to have all the talents in the team, it makes it more challenging for you to accomplish the task. So, in such situation you need some multiple clones of you, to understand your challenges, with the same skills and talents as you are, taking the task smoothly to completion along with you.

One of the important aspects is that you need to coach your team or your followers to replicate the work you do. By cloning people like you, you can achieve extraordinary results as a team. As you know, that success is not an individual effort, and it is a team effort. You need to build a better team to achieve better results and accomplish great success in the mission you have undertaken. Sometimes you will come across in organizations, where leaders are not open minded to teach their team with what they know, they feel that when they teach the team or followers with their talents, the people in their group will learn all the abilities and will try to surpass them in the organization. It is a wrong attitude, and you will land up being a bad leader. The role of a leader is to be reachable, teachable and to be able to lead.

"True leaders don't create followers. They create more leaders." – Tom Peters, The Prophet of Transformation.

As a leader, you should be approachable by anyone, when someone is having some issues or challenges, the first thing that should pop in their mind is that they need to reach you for some suggestions or help. Credibility is built in the people's mind only when they realized that you are a peoples' person. You came across as very friendly and trusted person among other people, and you come across as a person who helps them without expecting anything in return and feels that you are open to teaching enabling them to become a better person in life. Another important thing you need to know in life is that when you come forward and grow people in your team, the more efficient the people in your group becomes, the more your credibility will increase and this will help you to develop and lead you to better opportunities in your organization.

Not only that you need to coach your followers on your talents, but you also need to incorporate the same mindset in the minds of your followers by changing the culture in your organization and creating a learning process which will help everyone in the organization. You cannot be the only coach in the entire organization; you need to create programs where people can start learning and developing themselves and others both formally and informally. You should become a role model in your organization and set a standard by leading this learning program and doing all that matters in making this program a success.

"Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others." – John C. Maxwell.

Leadership can be applicable everywhere, not only in the organization. You can be a leader in every aspect of life; there is a wrong notion that you need to have a position or title in the organization to be a leader. That is not true. You don't need to have any title to become a leader. If you do good things for other people and try to help them when they are in need and guide them for their better life, then you are a leader. In short, a leader is a person who adds value to other people's life without expecting anything back from them. So, try to make a difference in this world. You can lead without the need for a position or formal authority. Everyone can make a difference irrespective of their title or no

title. Work hard to accomplish your mission, which will leave you a legacy. As a leader, your role is to focus on what is right for the people and overcome what is wrong.

"Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example." – Unknown Source

Not all managers are leaders. You may come across many people in the organizations who are in the role of executives or managers, thinking that they are leaders. In fact, manager and leader are two different functions altogether, although we often use this term interchangeably. Managers are facilitators of their team member's success. They supervise the members of the team and ensure that they have everything they need to perform well and produce the expected results successfully. The manager is the person who gives orders to the team members, demands respect from the team, sometimes takes credit for the team's success and blames the team member for their failures. Managers show the team what is wrong rather than showing what is right.

On the contrary, leaders can be any person in the team, not necessarily a manager. He or she has the capability to lead others, who thinks out of the box and has a creative idea, and who has the experience necessary for the business or project that can prove useful to the team and the manager. A leader leads the team based on his talents and strengths, not necessarily with the titles. A leader always shows the team on how to perform, willing to learn from others, seeks solutions, gives advice if needed, takes responsibility and as well admits mistakes. Leaders are the persons who always give credit to other persons, rather than keeping it just for themselves. Leaders show the team what is right instead of finding faults.

"A boss creates fear; a leader creates confidence.

A boss fixes blame; a leader corrects mistakes.

A boss knows all; a leader asks questions.

A boss makes work drudgery; a leader makes it interesting.

A boss is interested in himself or herself, a leader is interested in the group." – Russell H. Ewing.

Another aspect of leadership is that you need to start building more leaders like you, if you're not making more leaders like you, then you're not leading, you're following. Your responsibility as a leader regardless of whether you have a title or not is to help people to do the job they never dreamed they could do. Your duty is to inspire people to appreciate their talents, express their gifts and do the best job in their lives. That's part of what it truly means to lead. One of the crucial responsibilities you will face as a leader is to identify the right individual as a potential leader. It is not going to be an easy task for you to identify because it is a critical role in your organization, you need to be diligent in the identification of the right person. If you select the right person, the benefits are multiplied and will be nearly endless, but unfortunately, if you choose the wrong person, the problems are multiplied. You would have seen in many organizations, the hiring process for leaders are done in a hurry. Because they need to recruit the person due to desperation, lack of time, or just plain ignorance, they quickly appoint any candidate who comes along, then they hope everything will work out well.

Not always, the people who you recruit are having all the qualities of the leader; they may be lacking those leadership skills. In such a situation, the best way to go about is to provide the proper training to that candidate on leadership skills and try to see if he is capable of learning and handling things in the right way and growing as a potential leader, but not always you would be successful in this. If you feel that the person is not able to handle the position even after providing the training, then the best way is to replace that person and recruit the right person for the job, rather than wasting time,

money and energy on him which may lead to the failure of the project or job he was working on. There are some essential qualities which you need to consider a person while recruiting them as a potential leader in your organizations.

Some of the essential qualities of leadership which you need to consider while you are recruiting for the potential leader is:

- Does the person possess any vision or see things in a big picture?
- What values has the person provided to others and his followers?
- How successful has the person accomplished his task or mission?
- As the person defined any goals and how many of them as the person accomplished?
- Does the person has clarity in his ideas, strategy, plans, and in providing any information?
- Is the person willing to take risk and responsibility if anything goes wrong?
- How good is the person in crisis management?
- The most important thing is, does he possess the integrity?

To Learn more about the different qualities of leadership, please visit my website www.betheceoofyourlifenow.com for a free bonus.

Based on the above essential qualities, if you can identify a potential leader, then you need to start working on building the person into a leader they can become. There are four elements which you need to follow to convert the person into a successful leader. The four elements are believing in that person, encouraging the person, Sharing the knowledge with the individual and most importantly trusting the person.

"A Successful person finds the right place for himself. But a successful leader finds the right place for others." – John C. Maxwell

As a leader, you are responsible for finding a good leadership model for yourself. Unfortunately, it is not straightforward and there is no right leadership model in this world for everyone to follow that can guarantee you will become a more efficient leader. You can create your own, one that fits your environment that accounts for the type of followers that you are leading which plays to your strengths. In building your leadership model, there are a couple of important criteria's which you need to think about before you start. The best and the faster way is to study the lives of different successful leader who are both alive and death and try to understand their style of leadership and try to incorporate the distinct style of leadership which suits you. You can also build your own style of leadership with the combination of multiple successful leader's leadership qualities. Most of the time, you will notice that majority of the leaders will have most of their qualities in common. So, it is up to you to decide and pick which one you prefer. Please visit my website www.betheceoofyourlifenow.com for a free bonus, to learn more about how to choose a leadership model for yourself.

If you choose to build your own leadership style, that leverages your talents. It will require you to take a good hard look at yourself to understand better and do a realistic self-assessment check to create a solid understanding from which you can start your development plan – a direction for your self-improvement and growth on leadership. But if you take this approach of building your own leadership style, you need to be committed and have a perseverance for the character change. A sincere recommendation is not to start with this path of building your own leadership style if you are beginning your career and trying to move into leadership journey unless you wish to try this route of the journey at

your own risk. If you decide to take your own leadership journey and you proceed with dedication and stick on to this path irrespective of any hurdles on the way. I am confident that you will be successful and you won't regret it!

In the next chapter, I will be discussing more how to live your life intentionally which will enable you to achieve your goals and ambitions that you have identified in your life and different strategies on how to live your life with purpose, making your dream come true.