

## 50 TIPS FOR BETTER LEADERSHIP

### 1. LEAD BY TRAINING OTHERS:

The leader who doesn't fear competition and has the best interests of his organization at heart always trains capable assistants who some day will assume leadership roles. To do this, break down each job into simple operations. Review instructions and repeat operations until the trainee has learned how to perform each task properly.

### 2. NEVER STOP LEARNING HOW:

You can improve leadership skills and techniques in several ways: Read books on leadership. Take college courses and attend institutes of leadership. Observe and talk with successful leaders. Gain practical experience in leading others in actual and simulated situations. Each new leadership role requires more information and skill. These you must acquire. There is no end to what you can learn.

### 3. MASTER THE SIMPLE FIRST:

Much of the failure and frustration in democratic leadership stems from young people who try to start too near the top. This difficulty arises from egotism or ignorance. If you're still young you'll find it's much wiser to learn leadership in simple situations or in small groups. Then train for the more difficult roles.

### 4. LOOK FOR LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS:

As our society becomes more complex it requires more capable leaders to manage its affairs. We can meet this need if educators, businesspersons, scientists, and other leaders will prepare rosters of gifted young people who can be trained for leadership roles in the community and nation. Youngsters who have

demonstrated high aptitude for leadership through identification tests and other screening devices are our greatest national asset.

### 5. CULTIVATE RIGHT CLIMATE:

Aspire to leadership roles at home, school, church, party, work. Then exploit the situations that enable you to use the leadership talents and techniques you've acquired. Let your light shine so others recognize your qualifications for leadership.

### 6. BE FAITHFUL TO PRINCIPLE:

It's trite, of course--even smacks of self-righteousness. But it was said of Lincoln that he sank himself in his cause. His humble, childlike manner was certainly superior to the egotistical, irresponsible attitudes of the boss or the dictator. You'll find that the safest path to leadership is through unselfish service for others.

### 7. BE BUOYANT:

Keep your thinking flexible. Rules, ruts, and routine have ruined many leaders. Avoid blind-alley jobs and dead-end careers. Observe the customs of the group, but avoid becoming tied down by precedents. High vision is essential, change is inevitable, and true progress is desirable. The moss-back in business and the stand-patter in the plant will always block the road to greater productivity.

### 8. BE A GOOD FOLLOWER:

Almost every leader is a follower of some superior. To become a leader, learn to be a loyal follower of your present superior. To learn how to give orders, learn first how to take orders and execute them. Learn how to coordinate the activities of others by cooperating with those you come in contact

with. Learn teamwork if you want to become captain of the team. Take part in competitive games and group activities in which you can learn how to follow. You'll become a better leader for it.

### **9. LEARN TO LIKE PEOPLE:**

Love for God and mankind is the basis of all true leadership. It may be enough to like your friends, but you'll have to learn to love your enemies if you want to defeat them. When Lincoln was criticized for not being tough on his enemies, he said that if he made friends of his enemies he had conquered them. To learn how to love everybody requires great patience and perseverance, but it is the only course to follow.

### **10. BE YOURSELF ALL THE TIME:**

A high personality quotient, revealed by tests or direct observation, is most desirable. But if it took no more than that to make a great leader, television and moving-picture stars would be running the nation's business. Significant individuality--or a strong personality, well-integrated--is helpful in many kinds of leadership. Ready wit, a nimble mind, a good memory for names and faces--are useful qualities for business leaders. But don't lean too heavily on personality. Strengthen your professional knowledge and technical skill.

### **11. EARN RESPECT:**

Position-holders and those who inherit wealth or office are not necessarily leaders. The mere fact that you have been appointed to some position doesn't insure your success as a leader. But it is an opportunity to prove that you are one. Don't stand heavily on your title, your dignity, or your authority.

### **12. INSPIRE OTHERS:**

A leader knows how to get things done

through others. To get results find the person who wants to do the job and has the ability to do it. The reluctant follower isn't much help to the leader. The better way is to appeal to your follower's self-respect, arouse his ambition, stimulate his imagination and encourage his initiative. Leaders should read the new books on the media of communication and the methods of motivation. Some authorities say that the best way to move people to action is to make them laugh, make them mad, or make them cry.

### **13. BE EXCITING AND ENTHUSIASTIC:**

A merry heart, sparkling eyes, a warm handshake, lively interest and emotional stability are modes of behavior that you can consciously cultivate through training and practice. The stiff-as-a-poker, cool-as-a-cucumber, aloof-as-the-Sphinx individual can't lead anything well. Anybody who wants to ignite the fires of civic conscience must throw off a few sparks. To be exciting, let your enthusiasm overflow and your light shine.

### **14. BE CONFIDENT:**

A confident air inspires the respect you need to control others. Be sure of your facts, understand the issues raised and the principles involved in the situation that confronts you. Then you'll feel confident and act the way you feel. This confidence will convey conviction to others. Bluffing, braggadocio, and bombast don't beget confidence.

### **15. MATCH PEOPLE TO THE JOB:**

Interest is as vital as intelligence and skill. So try to discover the basic interests of people through interest tests and other devices. Influence those you work with by discovering what they want or what pleases them. Where two plans of equal merit are presented for your consideration, select the plan developed by the person who will be chosen to carry it out. Interest in the plan

is the seed you sow to help insure its successful completion.

**16. EXPECT THE BEST OF PEOPLE:**

If your subordinates and assistants are carefully selected, trained, and supervised, you (their leader) will know what to expect of them, and you'll feel you can place full confidence in their abilities. They'll respond by turning out a first-rate job or a high-grade product. Most people seek to win and deserve the confidence that is reposed in them.

**17. KEEP YOUR POISE:**

Lack of poise is due to careless mental habits. If you lack poise, work to deliberately and studiously acquire it through religion, psychology, or practical experience. You can conquer a sense of failure and frustration, or doubt, dismay, and defeat through conscientious study and self-analysis. Inner tranquility produces outward calm, grace and charm. The simplest way to achieve assurance is to think about others instead of about yourself. Systematically avoid being a head-scratcher, a fingernail biter, a table tapper, or a ceiling gazer. These mannerisms invariably reveal a lack of poise and self-assurance.

**18. BE ACTIVE:**

The dynamic leader is their own self-starter. Always open to inspiration and intuition, and translates thought into action. They learn how to dramatize action through salesmanship, and sportsmanship. So be active without being aggressive. Start things--but be sure you finish them. Follow through with verve and enthusiasm. You can conquer apathy and lethargy by cultivating habits of mental and physical activity.

**19. BE HUMBLE--BUT NOT TOO HUMBLE:**

Never belittle anyone--openly or secretly.

See others as they are in reality. Neither underestimate nor overestimate your own or another's ability. Don't belittle yourself, your present position, or your future possibilities. Personal vanity, executive conceit, and family pride are mild forms of self-delusion in which no leader can afford to indulge. Be as careful of what you say to yourself as you are about what you say to others.

**20. BE CONSISTENT:**

Nobody can follow the leader who gyrates wildly. The person who is a firebrand one moment and an iceberg the next, who is cordial one day and crusty the next, or who flatters one week and frightens the next, bewilders his followers. The better way is to be even tempered, consistent in attitudes, and predictable in reactions. These traits attract followers and harmonize human relations.

**21. BE GRACIOUS:**

Courtesy and kindness pave the way to progress in leadership and pay big dividends in terms of good will and loyal support to those who unfailingly practice these rules. The true leader is as courteous to his opponents as he is considerate of his supporters. Catty, curt, and condescending attitudes have ruined the careers of many men who were otherwise qualified for responsible executive positions.

**22. KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION:**

Some authorities maintain that leadership is a phase of organization. To be most effective the leader should know thoroughly the details of organization--its policies, procedures, personnel, methods, and functions. This rule holds true whether one is leading a political, civic, religious, business, professional, or military organization. Be sure you know what your group stands for. Give people goals--a sense of direction.

**23. BE AN ATTENTIVE LISTENER:**

Superiors, equals and subordinates deserve the keenest interest and closest attention during personal conversation and group discussion. The adroit leader asks for opinions and pays careful attention to what is said. The person who asks for opinions and does not evaluate what is said is merely waiting to tell people what to do.

**24. FOLLOW CHAIN OF COMMAND:**

The supervisor who ignores their superior and takes his ideas directly to the Commander usually defeats their own purpose by attempts at slicing off their superior's prestige, or authority. In making suggestions or giving orders it's wiser to follow the lines of authority downward and the lines of responsibility upward. The wisest person who ever lived said: "No person can serve two masters."

**25. LEARN FROM OTHERS:**

There are few all-around geniuses who are experts on everything. Every specialist has limitations. The great leader learns how to make use of experts and specialists in many fields.

**26. BE COOPERATIVE IN SEEKING ANSWERS:**

There's no leadership in a social vacuum. Leadership is a process whereby one person influences social or democratic leadership always related to an organization, group, or movement that presents issues, questions, or problems for which the leader helps find acceptable solutions for workable answers.

**27. BE INTERESTED:**

A sincere interest in the welfare of others and a warm-hearted appreciation of what they stand for and are doing for the organization is of the utmost importance to successful leadership. You can show

this by use of first names, inquiry about family news, mention of hobbies, and other approaches. Show respect for others by avoiding gossip. Don't discuss race, religion, politics, and other things that are strictly personal. These little things help to strengthen the leader's position.

**28. DON'T SHOW OFF AUTHORITY:**

Assume others are working with you but for the organization. Ask people to help you. Make suggestions but issue few orders. Attitudes of dictation and domination breed lackeys, not leaders. Exercise influence through regulation, training conferences, staff meetings, and personal interviews in which you can display your technical knowledge and professional skill, and seldom through a direct show of authority.

**29. BE THOUGHTFUL:**

When you're conducting personal interviews or group meetings, plan in advance what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. Choose your words with care, watch the inflection in your voice, and be sure you've made your meaning clear. Many people use an interview checklist to make sure they've forgotten no vital point.

**30. CRITICIZE CONSTRUCTIVELY:**

The best way is by correcting errors, reviewing regulations, issuing new instructions, or restraining employees or followers who are making mistakes. Smart people take a hint without offense if you use such methods. Before criticizing be sure you have all the facts, see all angles of the situation, and know how performance or production can be improved by correct practice. Where possible, criticize methods and techniques instead of persons. If personal criticism seems necessary, soften it with a little praise.

### **31. DELEGATE AUTHORITY:**

One of the principles of executiveship is to delegate authority and hold subordinates accountable for results. The wise leader selects and supervises subordinates, delegates to them the details of management, then evaluates the results.

### **32. ADMIT YOUR OWN MISTAKES:**

The wise leader honestly admits mistakes and corrects them in humility. Never gives alibis--or blames others for failures. Many great leaders have assumed responsibility for the mistakes of subordinates. If you assume an air of omniscience, you lose esteem when you're found to be fallible.

### **33. BE FIRM BUT FAIR TO EVERYBODY:**

The deft leader avoids public extortion of his followers. They use threats and rebukes only as a last resort to bring people into line. It is not good leadership techniques to slight, scold, or ignore others. You can usually avoid the need for any kind of disciplinary measures through proper training, supervision, and the use of modern grievance procedures. *Lead and coach. Don't club and coax.*

### **34. PLAN PROGRAMS IN ADVANCE:**

Planning is a blueprint for action. It's essential for short-term and long-range leadership. Good timing is as necessary as wise planning. Conference, committee, and group leaders should always plan programs, schedule meetings, and select those people who are to participate in them well in advance. It's the duty of the leader to select subjects for discussion, assemble materials, develop outlines, prepare reports, and thus help the group to arrive at decision and carry out directions.

### **35. STUDY THE GREAT LEADERS:**

Scientists who have specialized in

leadership research and training have used over 250 terms to describe and classify the various kinds of leaders. Study the literature on leadership to determine the specific qualifications and techniques that are necessary for the proper performance of the leadership role you either now occupy or aspire to in the future. Reading biographies and autobiographies of leaders in your field will help you learn valuable things from their experiences and avoid costly errors.

### **36. BE AFFIRMATIVE AND CREATIVE:**

The greatest leaders are positive, affirmative, constructive, creative, and cooperative in their outlook on things. But the boss, despot, dictator, and demagogue tend to be negative, opinionative, abusive, abrasive, and destructive in their attitudes toward others. Chronic complaining, grumbling, and criticizing are not conducive to leadership and should be avoided at all costs.

### **37. GIVE CREDIT:**

It's always wiser to turn the spotlight on the other person in the case of special achievement. To take undeserved credit *for another's work* and try to hang a halo on oneself are two fatal errors that inevitably result in loss of respect. These practices will deaden initiative, dull ambition, and completely destroy group morale. Give proper recognition for what others have done to promote the success of a project. This will pay double dividends to both the leader and follower.

### **38. PRAISE YOUR PEOPLE PUBLICLY:**

Normal people thrive on appreciation and praise. To praise privately, smacks of flattery. Proper recognition in a public meeting usually inspires people to achieve greater effectiveness. For work well done judicious praise by the appropriate official through a letter of commendation or by the award of some fitting emblem boosts

the recipient's morale and raises the prestige of the group.

### **39. REPROVE TACTFULLY:**

If your subordinates make errors or break rules, it's always better to reprove privately and informally. Reprimands in front of others cause resentment and defeat their real purpose. In taking disciplinary measures, avoid hurting the feelings of others if possible-- especially where innocent mistakes are made.

### **40. RATE FAIRLY--FIND A YARDSTICK:**

All modern industrial organizations use some kind of efficiency rating system that helps executives size up employees objectively. Every group needs a yardstick or rating scale to evaluate the performance of its officers or leaders. The 50 rules of leadership listed in this article may be used as a self-rating scale to compel leaders to face up to their own performance, improve leadership techniques.

### **41. KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED:**

Don't try to put things over on people or keep them in the dark about matters of vital interest to them. If you expect teamwork treat people as members of the team, entitled to know what's going on. This builds confidence, avoids suspicion, and strengthens morale by cultivating a sense of belonging.

### **42. RESPECT THE WORK OF OTHERS:**

Perhaps even better than making an individual feel important is showing them how they fit into the general plan. Get them to see that his well-done work is what makes a success of the organization. If they feel that they are a mere cog in a machine they may feel frustrated and lose ambition. For this reason you'll often need orientation, indoctrination, and morale building programs to help each member

see the importance of his job, however modest it may be. We all need to see our own place in the scheme of things before we start clicking.

### **43. GIVE REASONS:**

It's always well to explain the whys and wherefores of policies and decisions. This way, you'll avoid bickering and backbiting. People want to know why. They want to know what they're doing, how to do it the best way and why it's the correct way to do it. So wherever possible give the reasons for everything. People will risk their lives and fortunes on a righteous cause they understand.

### **44. TALK DIRECTLY, BRISKLY:**

Be clear in thought and direct in manner without being blunt in speech. Look intently at people and speak directly to them. Stick to the subject and draw out the other person to find out what he's thinking. Otherwise you'll have difficulty in influencing his action. Be brisk without being brusque. Briskness in speech, glances, gestures, and responses can be cultivated and made habitual modes of thought and action through patient practice. Incisive thinking promotes decisive action.

### **45. COMPROMISE, DON'T APPEASE:**

The radical and the reactionary are usually in a rut. The best leaders occupy the middle ground between those who lag behind and those who rush ahead of the group. Learn to compose differences and make concessions when this doesn't endanger the ultimate success of the cause and involves no departure from principle. Don't make a fighting issue of trivial matters. Preserve your neutrality between small cliques in the organization by enabling them to see the common goal. In making compromises, you'll be safer to please others than to please yourself.

**46. BE GOOD TO YOURSELF:**

Avoid any suggestions of self-punishment, self-destruction, or the temptation to kill yourself with overwork in order to succeed. Rid yourself of all irrational beliefs that you are unworthy, unkind, or unable to succeed. Such suggestions have only a self-defeating purpose. You should root them out of your consciousness.

Failure is as often due to imaginary deficiencies as it is to real ones. You can avoid such faults if you spend as much time improving your leadership techniques as you previously spent worrying about your shortcomings. Be good to yourself by helping others.

**47. BE BRAVE, NOT BRASH:**

Cowardice in the leader can never inspire courageous followers. Overcome fear and cowardice by developing courage in the group. Take courage together. Cowardice and fear arise mostly from a sense of inferiority, which you can overcome through study and experience. A simple method of overcoming cowardice is to face it squarely--first with brave thoughts, then with brave words and finally with brave deeds. Learn to do the thing you seem afraid to do. Fear is faith in evil.

**48. CULTIVATE A SENSE OF HUMOR:**

Learn to be diplomatic by cultivating tact and a sense of humor. There are few if any born diplomats. Tact, or a sense of proportion, is the ability to be diplomatic in difficult situations. This objective attitude prevents one from becoming ruffled at rebuffs. It's a priceless leadership trait that can be cultivated. Learn to display tact by a pleasant word, a friendly glance, or a show of patience. A sense of humor is the ability to see things out of proportion. It's best expressed in ready repartee, a funny story, or a hearty laugh at jokes on yourself or others. It relieves strain, lightens heavy burdens, breaks down barriers, softens antagonisms, and

helps the leader to glide over the rough spots and avoid awkward breaks in personal relations. Although these two attitudes view life from different angles, they travel well together and always attract followers.

**49. BE DYNAMIC:**

Democracy demands dynamic leaders who have the driving energy and dogged determination to protect the nation from enemies within and without. Leaders with this dynamic ability to incite people to heroic action and unselfish service must be discovered and developed or this nation will go the way of a dozen democracies since the days of ancient Athens.

**50. CULTIVATE MORAL FIBER:**

Most important is the need for spiritual force and moral fiber in statesmen and other kinds of leaders. These qualities are often strong in poets, prophets, and saints. They were dominant in the lives of such statesmen as Washington, Lincoln, Gandhi, and others. Absence of these qualities contributed to the decline and eclipse of Napoleon, Hitler and Mussolini. The study of the characters and careers of the world's great leaders shows that when they were loyal to principle they seldom lost the support of the people they served. In like manner our own ability to understand, and our willingness to follow the established rules of leadership without hesitation or reservation, will determine in large measure our capacity to lead others.