

# Work / Life

The Qualities of Skillful Leadership

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If you want to be a leader who attracts quality people, the key is to become a person of quality yourself. Leadership is the ability to attract someone to the gifts, skills, and opportunities you offer as an owner, as a manager, as a parent. I call leadership the great challenge of life.

What's important in leadership is refining your skills. All great leaders keep working on themselves until they become effective. Here are some specifics:

**1. Learn to be strong but not rude.** It is an extra step you must take to become a powerful, capable leader with a wide range of reach. Some people mistake rudeness for strength. It's not even a good substitute.

**2. Learn to be kind but not weak.** We must not mistake kindness for weakness. Kindness isn't weak. Kindness is a certain type of strength. We must be kind enough to tell somebody the truth. We must be kind enough and considerate enough to lay it on the line. We must be kind enough to tell it like it is and not deal in delusion.

**3. Learn to be bold but not a bully.** It takes boldness to win the day. To build your influence, you've got to walk in front of your group. You've got to be willing to take the first arrow, tackle the first problem, and discover the first sign of trouble.

**4. You've got to learn to be humble but not timid.** You can't get to the high life by being timid. Some people mistake timidity for humility. Humility is almost a God-like word.

A sense of awe. A sense of wonder. An awareness of the human soul and spirit. An understanding that there is something unique about the human drama versus the rest of life. Humility is a grasp of the distance between us and the stars, yet having the feeling that we're part of the stars. Humility is a virtue; timidity is a disease. Timidity is an affliction. It can be cured, but it is a problem.

**5. Be proud but not arrogant.** It takes pride to win the day. It takes pride to build your ambition. It takes pride in community. It takes pride in cause, in accomplishment. But the key to becoming a good leader is being proud without being arrogant. In fact, I believe the worst kind of arrogance is arrogance from ignorance. It's when you don't know that you don't know. Now that kind of arrogance is intolerable. If someone is smart and arrogant, we can tolerate that. But if someone is ignorant and arrogant, that's just too much to take.

**6. Develop humor without folly.** That's important for a leader. In leadership, we learn that it's okay to be witty but not silly. It's okay to be fun but not foolish.

Lastly, deal in realities. Deal in truth. Save yourself the agony. Just accept life like it is. Life is unique. Some people call it tragic, but I'd like to think it's unique. The whole drama of life is unique. It's fascinating. And I've found that the skills that work well for one leader may not work at all for another. But the fundamental skills of leadership can

be adapted to work well for just about everyone: at work, in the community, and at home.

(Source: Jim Rohn, motivational speaker, author, philosopher, and entrepreneur. <http://www.jimrohn.com>)

### WEB SITE PICKS

<http://www.intershipper.com>

#### Compare Shipping Prices Easily Before You Call Fedex

Intershipper lets you compare the prices of Federal Express, Airborne/DHL, UPS, and the post office. All you do is enter the weight of the package and the origin and destination zip codes, and you get a table showing prices for one-day, two-day, and regular ground shipping.

"May the happiest days of your past be the saddest days of your future."

—Abraham Lincoln

### HEALTHY FOOD TIP

#### Does Chicken Soup Have Healing Powers?

You've likely heard it proclaimed throughout your entire life: chicken soup is good medicine. Whether it was your mother,

grandmother, or a Campbell's soup commercial handing out the advice, a steaming bowl of chicken soup has been touted as the cure for just about every ailment, from the common cold to a nasty scrape on the knee.

But is chicken soup, in and of itself, really a "medicine" of sorts? Does it actually possess healing capabilities, or is its magic all in our heads?

### Back in the Day

Around the 12th century, trusted healers started to prescribe "the broth of fowl" for their ill patients. It was during that time that Egyptian Jewish physician and philosopher Rabbi Moshe ben Maimonides started to write extensively about the benefits of chicken soup.

The ancient healer wrote, "The meat taken should be that of hens or roosters and their broth should also be taken because this sort of fowl has virtue in rectifying corrupted humours."

Maimonides used his "fowl brew" to treat things like hemorrhoids, constipation, and even leprosy. He strongly believed and especially praised the brew's healing power for respiratory illnesses like the common cold.

Since then, many researchers and scientists have pondered the question of whether or not chicken soup has any real health benefits to patients suffering from a cold. Some have even done experiments to see if there is such proof.

### Is the Proof in the Soup?

Dr. Stephen Rennard, M.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center, thought his family's chicken soup really did work, but as a scientist, he wanted proof.

"One day we were discussing chicken soup," Rennard explains. "My wife says that grandma says this is good for colds, and I said maybe it has some anti-inflammatory action."

Rennard tested his theory and added his wife's homemade chicken soup to white blood cells, called neutrophils. To his surprise, the soup did slow the neutrophils. In fact, he claims that chemicals in the broth-based elixir clear a stuffy nose by inhibiting inflammation of the cells in the nasal passages.

Dr. Rennard did admit that there needed to be more studies conducted, but believes his findings are one more piece to complete the puzzle.

Since Dr. Rennard's findings in the early 1990s, several studies have since agreed with his results and show chicken soup as a "relief" for the common cold, not a



"cure." All research agrees that the soup helps break up congestion and eases the flow of nasal secretions. In addition, many say it also inhibits the white blood cells that trigger the inflammatory response (causing sore throats and the production of phlegm.)

### The "Guts" of Chicken Soup

When you are feeling under the weather, it seems that everything hot helps to make you feel better. However, the good thing about chicken soup is that—properly prepared—it is loaded with valuable nutrients.

This includes:

**Chicken:** Chicken contains an amino acid called cysteine, a substance released when you make the soup. This amino acid is similar to the drug acetylcysteine, which is prescribed by doctors to patients with bronchitis. It thins the mucus in the lungs, making it easier to cough out. And hot chicken vapors have been proven more effective than hot water vapors in clearing out the cold in your nose.

**Carrots:** Carrots, one of the routine vegetable ingredients found in chicken soup, are the best natural source of beta-carotene. The body takes that beta-carotene and converts it to vitamin A. Vitamin A helps prevent and fight off infections by enhancing the actions of white blood cells that destroy harmful bacteria and viruses.

**Onions:** Onions, another chicken soup regular, contain quercetin, a powerful antioxidant that is also a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory.

### Final Note

While chicken soup isn't a cure for a cold, it does help alleviate some of the annoying symptoms that come with it. And, if nothing else, it definitely is a delicious, comforting meal that helps keep your body hydrated.

To get the full benefits, of course, we recommend homemade chicken soup using only natural ingredients.

(Source: <http://www.SixWise.com>)

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### The Best Time of My Life

It was June 15, and in two days I would be turning 30.

I was insecure about entering a new decade of my life and feared that my best years were now behind me.

My daily routine included going to the gym for a workout before going to work. Every morning I would see my friend Nicholas at the gym. He was 79 years old and in terrific shape. As I greeted Nicholas on this particular day, he noticed I wasn't full of my usual vitality and asked if there was anything wrong. I told him I was feeling anxious about turning 30. I wondered how I would look back on my life once I reached Nicholas's age, so I asked him, "What was the best time of your life?"

Without hesitation, Nicholas replied, "Well, Joe, this is my philosophical answer to your philosophical question:

"When I was a child in Austria and everything was taken care of for me and I was nurtured by my parents, that was the best time of my life.

"When I was going to school and learning the things I know today, that was the best time of my life.

"When I got my first job and had responsibilities and got paid for my efforts, that was the best time of my life.

"When I met my wife and fell in love, that was the best time of my life.

"The Second World War came and my wife and I had to flee Austria to save our lives. When we were together and safe on a ship bound for North America, that was the best time of my life.

"When we came to Canada and started a family, that was the best time of my life.

"When I was a young father, watching my children grow up, that was the best time of my life.

"And now, Joe, I am 79 years old. I have my health, I feel good, and I am in love with my wife just as I was when we first met. This is the best time of my life."

(Source: courtesy of <http://www.homeholidaysfamilyandfun.com>)

## QUIZ

### Just When You Thought You Knew Everything!

1. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
2. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
3. Only three words in Standard English begin with the letters "dw." They are all common. Name two of them.
4. There are fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name half of them?
5. How far does the cruise liner Queen Elizabeth II move for each gallon of diesel that she burns?
6. What word in the English language rhymes with month?
7. What is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon?

(Answers at end of newsletter)



## HUMOR

### Puns for Fun

Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine.

A backward poet writes inverse.

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.

A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two tired.

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

### More Writing Attempts from Student Papers

Her vocabulary was as bad as, like, whatever.

Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other like two freight trains, one having left York at 6:36 p.m. traveling at 55 mph, the other from Peterborough at 4:19 p.m. at a speed of 35 mph.

John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met.

The thunder was ominous sounding, much like the sound of a thin sheet of metal being shaken backstage during the storm scene in a play.

The red brick wall was the color of a brick-red crayon.

Even in his last years, Granddad had a mind like a steel trap, only one that had been left out so long it had rusted shut.

The plan was simple, like my brother Phil. But unlike Phil, this plan just might work.

## WORDS OF WISDOM

### Make People Happy

**Address negativity.** Deal with things that bother you as soon as possible. Many people mistakenly believe that it is better to let little things go by and save their breath for big issues. Little incidents add up, however, and erode relationships.

My four-step method for stopping negative behavior toward you...

*Inform:* Tell the person in a calm, neutral tone, "Your comment hurt me."

*Request:* Ask the person to stop. Say, "Would you please give me only constructive feedback?"

*Demand:* If the person's behavior doesn't change, say, "I have to insist that you stop criticizing me."

*Leave:* If there is still no change, say, "I'm going to leave the room. We can continue this conversation when you can give me constructive feedback."

**Underpromise and overdeliver.** Keeping expectations low lets you please others and reduce your own anxiety about disappointing them.

*Example:* If you're going to be 10 minutes late for a dinner appointment, tell your dinner companion that you will be 20 minutes late.

**Advantages:** You create a buffer in case you arrive even later. If you arrive earlier than the adjusted time, the other person will likely forget your initial tardiness and instead consider you prompt and considerate.

**Send thank-you notes every day.** Jot down a one or two line note to acknowledge anyone who affects your life positively. I mail thank-you notes to family members, colleagues, authors, politicians, bosses, bank employees, and teachers. An e-mailed thank you is better than none at all, but a personal phone call or a handwritten note is much more meaningful.

Don't worry about giving too much praise. Most people are starved for acknowledgment. Developing an appreciation for the people in your life will in turn attract more friends—and favors.

**Strengthen your strengths.** Many of my clients believe that they should be good at everything. Wrong! Doing a lot of things fairly well is not nearly as valuable as doing one thing extremely well.

Master what you're really good at. Delegate as much of the rest as possible. If you have a hard time letting go of tasks, think about how much energy you expend agonizing over tasks you neither like nor excel at.

(Source: Adapted from *Coach Yourself to Success: 101 Tips from a Personal Coach for Reaching Your Goals at Work and in Life* by Talane Miedaner (Contemporary, Jan 2000) <http://www.lifecoach.com>)

## INSPIRATION

### House of 1,000 Mirrors (*Japanese folktale*)

Long ago in a small, far away village, there was a place known as the House of 1,000 Mirrors. A small, happy little dog learned of this place and decided to visit. When he arrived, he bounced happily up the stairs to the doorway of the house. He looked through the doorway with his ears lifted high and his tail wagging as fast as it could. To his great surprise, he found himself staring at 1,000 other happy little dogs with their tails wagging just as fast as his. He smiled a great smile, and was answered with 1,000 great smiles just as warm and friendly. As he left the House, he thought to himself, "This is a wonderful place. I will come back and visit it often." In this same village, another little dog, who was not quite as happy as the first one, decided to visit the house. He slowly climbed the stairs and hung his head low as he looked into the door. When he saw the 1,000 unfriendly looking dogs staring back at him, he growled at them and was horrified to see 1,000 little dogs growling

back at him. As he left, he thought to himself, "That is a horrible place, and I will never go back there again."

All the faces in the world are mirrors. What kind of reflections do you see in the faces of the people you meet?

(Source: courtesy of <http://www.homeholidaysfamilyandfun.com>)

"He who laughs, lasts." —Mary Pettibone Poole

## TRAINING TIP

### Achieving Commitment to Change

We are predictably upset and perhaps even angry during a change. This is especially true if we have not had much prior experience in managing change or do not expect a change. Organizations, managers, and individuals need to recognize how difficult change is for people, and provide the tools and the time needed to work through it.

One model, based on the work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, illustrates change as a four-stage cycle.

Although the four phases of the Change Curve usually happen in sequence, some of us move back to a previous phase or get stuck in one phase:

*Denial:* We do not believe the change is real. In effect, we are in shock and may act as if we are not going to change. We remain focused on what is happening outside ourselves, ignoring our own reactions as we hold on to the past.

*Resistance:* We wake up from our Denial and discover that change will happen. We may feel afraid, angry, upset, or anxious about what is happening, and experience uncertainty, self-doubt, and difficulty as we struggle to respond to the change. At the end of this phase, we reach the point of acceptance.

*Exploration:* We begin to take action, learn new ways, and to decide how we will respond to the change. We remain focused on ourselves, but we shift our attention to the future. We begin to regain interest in the organization and think about what we can do to make the change work.

*Commitment:* We have reached the point of deciding what actions to take to master the new ways. We recover our productivity and sense of mastery. But we must also prepare to experience the next change. We are firmly connected to the future and have shifted our attention back to the organization.

We can increase our ability to move through these phases of change by developing the skills to manage them. Over time and with practice and hard work, we can learn to master these phases with reasonable speed. No matter the order or time frame we choose, though, we must eventually reach Commitment in order to perform effectively within the changed organization.

(Source: *Mastering the Change Curve* from HRDQ.  
<http://www.hrdq.com>)

## FINANCES

### Balancing Act

Improper asset ownership might trigger estate tax. Suppose, for example, that Ron and Teri Smith are married, with a total of \$4 million in assets. They are also the beneficiaries of each other's retirement accounts while everything else is held jointly, with right of survivorship.

If Ron dies in 2006, everything will pass to Teri, who will now have a \$4 million estate. If Teri dies in 2007 with a \$4 million estate, that would be \$2 million over the exemption amount, taxed at 45 percent, and the federal estate tax bill would be \$900,000.

That tax could have been avoided with a \$2 million bequest at Ron's death in 2006. That bequest might have gone to their children, for example, or to a trust structured to benefit Teri but be out of her estate. However, because their assets were owned jointly, it was impossible for Ron to leave assets to anyone but Teri.

Therefore, families with estate tax concerns should modify their use of joint ownership between spouses. Each spouse should have some assets in his or her own name that can be left to other parties at the first death, sheltered by the estate tax exemption.

(Source: <http://www.fedweek.com>)



### Answers for QUIZ on page 2

1. Strawberry
2. The pear grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the whole growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.
3. Dwarf, dwell, and dwindle.
4. Period, comma, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, brackets, parentheses, braces, and ellipses.
5. Six inches
6. No word in the English language rhymes with month.
7. February 865

### Questions/comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at [http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/code/cc/Pages/navig\\_01\\_06.pdf](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/code/cc/Pages/navig_01_06.pdf).