



Effective Leadership

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Over fifty years ago the 'researchers' had identified and wrote about the key qualities and characteristics of effective leaders. We still read about these attributes today: Visionary, Good Communicator, Trustworthy, Honest, and acts with Integrity, Willing to Listen etc. No doubt these are important qualities to have regardless of your position or title. But what really makes a good leader? This was also 'discovered' and written about over fifty years ago by a person called Douglas McGregor. McGregor suggested that leaders have a different way of thinking about others. He characterized these ways of thinking as "assumptions", and suggested that leaders make the following assumptions about others:

- People inherently want to work and apply themselves as naturally as they would play and rest.
- People are motivated to do a good job because one gets a sense of personal satisfaction from a job well done.
- People not only want, but will seek responsibility if given the opportunity to do so.
- People are creative and ingenious by nature.

Those who are not effective leaders tend to think (make assumptions) that:

- People are inherently lazy and only work because they have to.
- Therefore people need to be coerced in some way to get them to work. i.e.) Rewards, pay, threats, punishment.
- People don't want responsibility and will avoid it and therefore have little motivation.
- People don't want to think anymore than they have to in order to make a dollar.

Based on the above set of 'assumptions', leaders will behave and act very differently. If I think of you as capable, responsible, creative, ingenious, I will no doubt treat you in that way. I will provide you with challenging tasks, give



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you the freedom to make decisions that effect what you do. I will no doubt listen to your ideas, give you feedback, coach, mentor and support you to realize your full potential.

If however, I think of you as lazy, and good for nothing, I will no doubt treat you like a wheelbarrow, 'load you up' and 'push you around'.

No doubt we can all think of someone who showed real leadership but can also think of many more who pretended to be leaders or hid behind their titles. We all know how good leadership makes us feel good about ourselves and when we feel good about ourselves we always do our best.

Perhaps this can be best summed up in the words of a noted current auther, Stephen Covey who said...

"A Leader Is Someone Who Can Get The Best Out of Others Without Them Even Knowing It."