



Leadership

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LEADERSHIP

There are as many notions of what '*Leadership*' is, as there are websites on the subject. Certainly this article will not clarify what leadership is or how to acquire it. Rather, the writer wishes to simply express some of his views after some 50+ years of learning and experiencing life's lessons.

We often think of leaders as those who are 'in the front', 'emulated' or 'highly regarded' by others because of their wealth, power, or position. Yet, my experience has been that most people, if not all people are leaders in their own right. *Leadership* seems to be more a matter of demonstrating some talent or capability that others look at in admiration. And, typically we 'admire' others for qualities we feel we do not possess ourselves. For example, personally, anyone who can play any type of musical instrument and produce a recognizable tune, I admire. They are leaders in their own right. And, those individuals who can play a musical instrument look upon others with other talents (leaders) and so the cycle goes.



Leaders invariably inspire others to do things they might not normally do. Position, power, title, wealth have little if nothing to do with inspiration. As an example of this, I was engaged in an outdoor wilderness experience with a number of youth (12 – 14 years old). This was by all accounts a grueling experience. One of the young hikers was having a very difficult time with the challenge, as was I. He often stopped and cried, saying, "I can't go any further". He was my inspiration, he was a leader, and I told him, "If he could do this so, can I". Every step he took inspired me to take the next step as well. He was, for all intent and purposes, a *leader*.

Think of how many times and situations we encounter where we are either Leaders or benefiting from the *Leadership* of others. Simply getting up in the morning and going about the day's activities when one wants to stay in bed, is an expression of *Leadership*. Doing what we do best, whatever that it is an expression of *Leadership*. It's not always



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necessary to 'do better', its just necessary to 'do'. *Stephen Covey* in his book, "*The Eighth Habit*" says that "*Leadership* cannot be taught but it can be learned'. As an 'educator', I have learned that people only learn when they are ready, and readiness usually implies a need. Sometimes though, it's not easy to recognize what we need; we are more inclined to focus on what we want. And, as a Rolling Stones lyric sings, "You don't always get what you want, but if you try real hard, you always get what you need".

So what does this mean? For me, it means anyone at anytime can be a leader and can positively influence the actions of others without knowing himself and can help others realize their own potential. And, they can help others realize their own potential and worth, without knowing they are doing so. If leadership means positively influencing others to realize their potential for a common purpose then we are all leaders, for someone, sometime.