

# 10 Characteristics of Great Leaders

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While it's commonly argued whether great leaders are born or made, there's little doubt that great leaders share several characteristics. ***Leadership skills are among the most important to develop if you wish to advance your career.*** You'll find that you already possess some of these qualities and likely need to develop the others.

### Great leaders share these qualities:

- 1. Lead by example.** Effective leaders know that they can get the best out of others by setting a good example. ***If you want your followers to be committed, positive, passionate, and involved, demonstrate those characteristics each day.*** What are you currently communicating to others by the example you set?
- 2. Take responsibility.** Lousy leaders look to shift the blame when things start go wrong. A great leader, however, knows that setbacks occur. He also knows that if failure occurs, it was his poor planning, vision, effort, or leadership that resulted in the poor results.
  - A great leader accepts responsibility for the outcome, both positive and negative.
- 3. Vision.** To lead effectively, a leader must know where she's headed. After all, you have to lead to a specific destination. Do you have a vision for the future and can you communicate that vision to others? Is your vision clear and easy to understand? Is your vision focused? Do you know where you're going?
- 4. A plan.** *You might know where you're going, but do you know how to get there?*

Can you effectively share that plan with the members of your team? Is your plan believable and achievable?

5. **Great communication skills.** *The ability to share your vision and your plan are paramount to success.* Effective leaders are excellent communicators and work to enhance their communication skills further.

6. **Motivator.** It's been said that one skill needed by great leaders is the ability to inflict pain on team members and get away with it. Impressive future results require sacrifice and discomfort in the present. Are you able to inspire people enough that they'll continue to follow you instead of revolting against you?

7. **Know how to develop others.** It's important to develop others to become better leaders. A great leader takes the time to develop the skills of her followers. The more capable your followers, the more impressive the results you'll ultimately attain.

8. **Inspire confidence in others.** If people don't believe you'll be successful, you won't receive their best efforts.

9. **Integrity.** Team members have to believe and trust in their leader. Can your team believe what you say? Do your team members trust that you're fully committed to the project and to them? *Without integrity, no one will trust you enough to commit and engage with your plans.*

10. **Can deal with chaos.** Chaos is inevitable when working on big projects with a lot of people. Things often go wrong. Team members have personal issues. There's always someone disgruntled. Plans change. The objective can change.

- A great leader knows how to calmly and purposefully deal with the unexpected and guide others through the resulting distractions.

How many of these 10 characteristics do you possess? Are you willing to develop those qualities that you lack? ***Great leaders have several qualities in common that you can learn and apply to enhance your leadership skills.*** Review these qualities and look for ways to further develop your leadership abilities.