

THE MANY SIGNPOSTS OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership begins with a vision. Not just any vision, but one molded by values, including dedication to generosity and service. Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen, and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him.” For what its worth, I keep this verse in a frame on a wall across from a toilet in the downstairs bathroom in our home.

What follows are ten signposts of leadership I’ve learned over the years.

1. Treat people with respect. Listen carefully. Invite them into your office. Visit their offices regularly. Get to know staff as people first, as employees second.
2. Offer encouragement. It’s free. Doesn’t cost anything. You never run out. Encourage someone every hour of every day.
3. Express gratitude. Live gratefully. Recognize whatever you have allegedly achieved it is the result of others who have come before you. Expressing gratitude builds relationships. Remember, life is a freely given gift. You didn’t earn it. Gratitude is the fundamental prayer.
4. Have a vision. Share that vision. Repeatedly. Stay flexible. Amend the vision as warranted, as you gain new knowledge and insights. Don’t be afraid of change. Life requires change. So does good leadership.
5. Make decisions. Don’t put them off unnecessarily. A leader is paid to make decisions. Don’t expect to be right all the time. Someone once told me fifty-one percent does fine. But decide!
6. Share successes. Take responsibility for failures. Doing so helps assure you’ll get better help next time around.
7. Remember, life is like a rollercoaster, full of ups and downs. So is work. Don’t spend too much time relishing accomplishments. You are headed down. But neither despair in bad times. You are certainly soon headed back up. In the worst of times repeat to yourself: “This, too, shall pass.”
8. Family and health first. Before work. Failure to cultivate life outside of work means you have little to bring to it. Further, such failure will make you a bore.
9. Maintain a rich sense of humor. Have fun. Enjoy work. Laugh, especially at yourself. The best leaders have good senses of humor.
10. Keep your head clear. Take time to sit quietly. If possible, several times daily. Actively practice meditation. Empty your head. Practice emptiness. It’s through this practice insights arise, patterns form, a sense of wholeness emerges. This might otherwise be called “connecting with the Spirit.” Listen to Her carefully. She’s the real Leader. You’re replaceable.

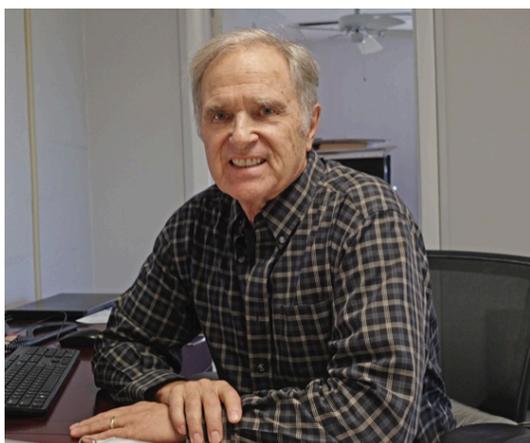


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