

The True Meaning of Leadership

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We in Emerging Leaders of Gaming are all part of a new class of leaders. But what does that mean for us and the people we lead? What kind of leaders do we want to be, and who are we leading? Who is leading us? Is a “boss” the same thing as a “leader”? The answers to these questions impact how we see others as well as how they see us.

Leadership is defined as the action of leading a group of people or an organization. “Leader”, in turn, is defined as the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country. We are all leaders in one capacity or another, and as a result, we practice leadership. From the captain of a basketball team to a high-ranking executive at a major corporation, we have all been or will be leaders at some point. The type of leader we want to be, however, is completely up to us, and even though leadership has one specific definition, it does not necessarily mean just one thing.

Typically, when we speak of leaders, we are referring to supervisors, managers, and executives, people who we deal with in our careers on a daily basis. But outside of the corporate world, there are leaders all around us. They may not have an official title or get the same type of recognition, but they are leaders nonetheless. Just as a CEO running a major corporation is a leader, a parent raising children and running a household is also a leader, just on a different scale. Continual leadership means being a leader in every aspect of life with all people, and many of us practice it without realizing it.

As a mother of three children, I try to apply the same practices at work that I do with my children. It is my parental job to do everything possible to support, help, teach, and sometimes make my children do what is necessary to prepare them for life as adults, where the goal is for them to be responsible and productive members of society. Being a good leader means bringing out someone else's best.

As managers and supervisors, we should also be doing this for our employees, and one of my greatest managerial achievements is shaping people into employees who learn, grow, and prepare themselves for better opportunities. My goal is for them to look back on their time working with me as a positive experience that prepared them for those opportunities.

When we do everything we can for our employees, they know that we see them not just as bodies in chairs, but as people who are cared for. Employees who know that they are cared for do their best work. A supervisor isn't just the person at the top of the organizational chart, but a member of the team. The more that an employee knows that he is valued, the more effort he will personally put forth to ensure his team's success.

As continual leaders, we can do this for others at every opportunity, striving continuously for self-improvement and encouraging our employees to do the same. There is always room for growth for both ourselves and our employees, and the chance to learn from someone or something unexpected. When we make a conscious effort to look for it, we find that every person we encounter has something to teach us or something to offer.

I'm sure that each of us can think of at least one person in our careers who we want to emulate, or who we would call a mentor, a person to learn from, or someone to ask for help or advice. These people become mentors to us because they've helped us become better than we were. My own mentors have not necessarily always been my superiors. Many of them haven't even worked within my organization, but they are continual leaders because they spend their daily lives bringing out the best in people, shaping them without even being aware of it.

By making a conscious effort to be a continual leader, I strive to do the same for others, hoping to bring out their best. Whether organizing a fundraiser, giving advice to friends, or parenting, my ultimate goal is to help people. With continual leadership, the possibilities become endless.