

How Can You Tell If Someone Has True Leadership Skills?

This Famous Study Narrows It Down to 1 Rare Trait

In 2001, this best-selling management consultant identified one leadership behavior found in the most successful CEOs. Some things just don't change over time.

By Marcel Schwantes *Principal and founder, Leadership From the Core* @MarcelSchwantes

In Jim Collins' landmark book *Good to Great* (published in 2001), his research team spent five years examining 1,435 "good" companies and discovered 11 unique companies from that bunch that transformed themselves into "great" companies, outperforming, at the time, the S&P 500.

Their secret formula? Collins found they had exceptional leaders displaying a paradoxical mix of intense professional will and extreme *personal humility*. They were described as modest, with a determination to create results by shifting the focus away from themselves and continually recognizing the contributions of others.

That was then, this is now, you say. Sure, let's admit that some of the companies in Collins' study have since waned in financial performance or shut down (like Circuit City). That aside, the same balance of fearlessness when it comes to making decisions coupled

with personal humility, you'll still find prevalent in leaders of the most successful companies on the planet today.

Having studied and witnessed such leaders in action myself over the course of twenty years, I have determined that the humble leaders Collins spent years studying practice these eight habits, still totally relevant today.

1. They let other people talk.

Humble leaders are self-confident enough to allow the other person to have the glory.

There is something very liberating in this strategy. For the leader, it serves as a way to empower and give people a voice; for the follower, respect and trust in the leader increases.

2. They admit being wrong.

Humble leaders speak three magical words that will produce more peace of mind and respect than a week's worth of executive coaching with me: "I was wrong." And three more: "You are right."

3. They rarely impose.

Humble leaders rarely slip into preaching or telling others what to do without permission, or imposing their point of view at will without discretion.

4. They seek input.

Humble leaders seek others' input (including their own followers) on how they are showing up in their leadership path. They might ask, "How am I doing?" It takes humility to ask such a question. And even more humility to consider the answer.

5. They give their people credit.

Humble leaders deflect the spotlight away from them and allow their team members to be in the spotlight. There is something very liberating for employees when they receive credit.

6. They speak their truth.

Humble leaders refuse to cut corners and don't say things to sugarcoat, to try to please others or to try to look good in front of their peers. They don't betray themselves or others by using words or making decisions that are not aligned with who they are.

7. They are teachable.

Humble leaders choose open-mindedness and curiosity over protecting their point of view. They gladly accept the role of learners because they know it will make them better. They know that each person has something important to teach them. They ask questions, and are sincerely interested in the answers.

8. They involve others.

Humble leaders create an environment in which risks are taken, allowing those around them to feel safe to exercise their creativity, communicate their ideas openly, and provide input to major decisions. Because there's trust there, not fear.

Parting thoughts.

The humble leader is a clear-cut winner because they achieve results, but not at the expense of people. This relational approach opens up all kinds of possibilities but it's not something people can "fake it till they make it."

Humble leaders are this way because character and integrity run through their veins. Thinking of this for yourself, when you operate from integrity, you gain the trust of the people you work with closely. They see you as dependable and accountable for your

actions, and they feel safe in your presence. There's clear competitive advantage in mastering humility.

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