

Member's Quarterly

Summer 2019 Edition

Ask the Expert

Become Better Leaders

Follow these five principles

Q: What should we be doing to develop as more effective leaders?

A: Spend some time observing the most effective leaders and you'll start to notice some recurring themes. Whether it's their ways of being, or certain things they do well and do often, the most effective leaders always stand out from the crowd. Not surprisingly, so does their impact. Look closely and you will see some of their personal leadership principles in action — principles that define who they are and influence the ways they think, act and lead.

In my work with leaders who want to be better or evolve some aspect of their organization's leadership culture, a few core leadership principles and practices stand out. The good news is that each of these can be developed and mastered by anyone who wants to strengthen their effectiveness as a leader. Here are five principles that frequently rise to the top:

1. Purpose Drives the Most Effective Leaders:

At the core, the most effective leaders have developed a **deep, enduring commitment to their leadership purpose, vision and values**. These are the leaders who know (and demonstrate) their purpose as a leader and help others see theirs too. They have spent time and energy getting clear about who they are as a leader and what matters to them. Their leadership reflects it. These leaders inspire others with their deep sense of purpose. They also cultivate common purpose within the teams and organizations they lead. The result? Better alignment, greater effectiveness and higher performance by all.

2. Effective Leaders are Fully Present:

The most effective leaders have developed their **capacity and commitment to being present**. They are fully present to themselves and each moment of their leadership; they are also present to others. Fully present leaders pay attention to the impact their leadership has on those around them and the larger world in which they lead. They appreciate fully that leaders set the tone and create the conditions for success in the teams and organizations they lead.

3. People are the Focus of the Most Effective Leaders:

Effective leaders define the success of others as one of the most important measures of their leadership. **For many, enabling the success of others is WHY they lead**. These leaders devote time and energy to developing others and make a consistent practice of supporting, encouraging and celebrating their personal and professional development. In the process, they grow more leaders.



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Feature continued

4. Effective Leaders are Open:

Being welcome, curious and fully open are also hallmarks of effective leadership. You'll see it in the ease and comfort with which they open themselves to diverse people, dissenting points of view and alternate ways of moving forward. They lead with curiosity and a willingness to learn and adapt. They encourage and invite the same for others. Correspondingly, they are comfortable with failure on the path to learning and growth. For effective leaders, doing what's right — however imperfectly — is more important than being right or doing it perfectly.

5. Effective Leaders are Fully Accountable:

When it comes right down to it, **effective leaders are accountable — on all fronts.** They take ownership for themselves and their impact; that's a given. Even more importantly, they take ownership for creating the conditions for individual, team and organizational success as well as its missteps. They are quick to acknowledge their own mistakes and make amends. They also readily take accountability when failure occurs.

These five core principles provide a powerful, enabling foundation. If you're keen to work on your leadership effectiveness, consider each of those areas for yourself:

1. Are you leading with purpose?
2. Are you being fully present?
3. Are you putting people first?
4. Are you being open?
5. Are you being fully accountable in all aspects of your leadership?

I encourage you to pick the principle that speaks most powerfully to you right now and commit to deepening your practice of it for the next few months. When you do, you'll be making a solid contribution to your effectiveness as a leader.

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