

## Leaders Under Construction - Developing Leadership Skills

Are leaders born or made?

Well, leaders are born, but only in la la land!!! You can be born with the traits of a leader but the right encouragement is a must for developing leadership skills.

While developing leadership skills at an early stage has its advantages, it's never too late to start if you haven't yet discovered the leader in you! And that's not a whole load of motivational hogwash.

In this piece, let's take a look at the why and how of developing leadership skills.

Successful management requires more than just assigning tasks to the team. It calls for a leader who can inspire team members to achieve their full potential. People want to be guided by a person they respect, someone who has a clear sense of direction. To be that person, there are certain things that you must BE, KNOW and DO. And that's what developing leadership skills is all about.

Robert K. Greenleaf

"The only test of leadership is that somebody follows."

If you want to set an example for others to follow, may we suggest the following check-list?

1. Test the waters: find out what people think about your style of management. This could be a real eye opener, and the key to making changes to your leadership style. Employ a 360 degree approach wherein you receive feedback from your team members and peers. Let your team in on the objective behind the survey. A relaxed and open environment will help draw out their honest opinion.
2. Listen hard: when your team members speak to you about all their work related worries, hear them out. You could convey empathy, suggest alternatives and create harmony within the team. GREAT LEADERS ARE GREAT LISTENERS!!!!
3. Connect: take complete responsibility for how you are heard. Always rephrase your message to make it sound positive. Effective communication is a fine art.
4. Be a people's person: an integral part of developing leadership skills is to learn to respect your team's capabilities. Let the team members take decisions on certain issues. Trust them with their work; don't be a watchdog.
5. Lead by example: your team must believe in your integrity, and that you really mean what you say. Be prepared to put your money where your mouth is. It works like a charm!
6. Share leadership: distribute tasks among group members depending on the situation and individual strengths. You become a better leader by involving more people in the leadership process.
7. Evaluate your success in tandem with that of the team: your prime responsibility is to ensure success and development of the team. Focus on building their skills as this will enhance motivation and team performance. Remember, their success is yours too!

Harvey S. Firestone said "The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership." We couldn't agree more!

### About the Author

Hi, I'm Akhil Shahani, a serial entrepreneur who wants to help you succeed. If you like to work smart, check out <http://www.smartentrepreneur.net>. It's full of articles and resources to help you start and grow your business successfully.

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