

Drafting Your Personal Definition of Leadership And Answering Two Critical Leadership Questions

Background

Having a personal definition of leadership is important because:

1. The process of reflecting on leadership will help you clarify what you think about leadership.
2. Your definition should lead to action, and leadership is action-oriented.
3. The process will help you clarify the three Rs of leadership:
 - a. Results: As you can see by the example shown below, organizations and people expect their leaders to get results.
 - b. Relationships: All definitions state or imply something about the relationship between the leader and the people he or she leads.
 - c. Roles: Because there is a relationship between the leader and the led, the leader ought to be clear, in general terms, about the leader's roles and the followers' roles.

The following is not an exhaustive list of leadership definitions; there are other viable and insightful definitions.

We provide the following list to stimulate discussion. An organization's senior leaders ought to define leadership formally, both personally and for the firm.

Examples of Leader Definitions

- The art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.
(by Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*)
 - Art: Leadership is not just knowledge of the theory; it is the application of knowledge and insight in daily situations with consistency and flexibility.
 - Mobilizing: Leaders gather resources – money, material, manpower – and get them moving in the right direction.
 - Want to Struggle: Excellence is a choice of making an effort and getting the results. Leaders inspire or prompt others to choose to be excellent.
 - Shared Aspirations: Leaders give their people the context for their effort and results. They set and communicate clear and compelling vision, goals, and objectives.
- Influence
(by John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*)
- Leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of a subordinate or group and persuade them to follow a particular course of action.
(by Chester Bernard)
- Leadership is the art of influencing others to accomplish a mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation.
(US Army)
- Leadership is the art to of influencing and directing people in such a way that will win their obedience, confidence, respect and loyal cooperation in achieving common objectives.
(US Air Force)
- Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your leadership potential.
(by Warren Bennis)

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Requirement 1:

Using the definitions provided above, draft your definition of leadership. You might consider the following verbs and nouns; use others as you desire.

Verbs to Describe a Leader's Actions				Nouns to Define a Leader's Outcomes			
Energize	Inspire	Connect	Direct	Outcomes	Objectives	Value(s)	Influence
Enable	Instill	Guide	Coach	Results	End-state	Team	Guidance
Encourage	Implement	Communicate	Mentor	Aspirations	Vision	Organization	Confidence
Empower	Provide	Influence	Exemplify	Goals	Mission	Ability	
Equip							

Answering Two Critical Questions

Author John Maxwell developed a five-level leadership model (Figure 1). The authority granted by your organization gives you "position" leadership. People will follow your instructions because they must; the organization has put you in charge. However, that does not mean that people have accepted you as a leader; they are simply following you as a manager or supervisor.

You will not get maximum effort from people until they permit you to be their leader, whether knowingly or unconsciously. After they perceive a benefit to your leadership, they will grant you "permission" leadership. There must be a benefit to being under your leadership. This is not some soft, 'touchy-feely' kind of leadership. It just simply means that people accept that you are a leader and not just a manager.



from John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*
Figure 1: Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership

Requirement 2: Consider the following questions and purposely set out to deliver leadership value.

- What is the benefit to being under my leadership?
- What is the benefit to the organization for having me as one of its leaders?