

Principles of Leadership

Many wish to be leaders. Few understand the true essence of Leadership, which is a compound of four separate ingredients, each one necessary and absolutely vital to all of the others. Those ingredients are:

- Clear vision
- Execution of tasks
- Objectivity
- Loyalty

Vision means one has the ability to see beyond today and its challenges, to set and pursue long term goals, yet stay in the moment enough to accomplish daily results. Vision and action, therefore, must always co-exist dynamically. Vision can be created from awareness, but it must continuously be modified by new perceptions. As one grows, as the world changes, one's vision will require adjustments. Therefore, the essence of vision is to be strategically flexible, and yet, the awareness behind one's vision is fundamentally unchangeable.

Vision without action is depression waiting to occur. Action without vision is too mechanical to be enjoyed. "Microwave thinking" (Seeking immediate gratification vs. allowing time by cultivating a great strategy) is the opposite of vision. When vision is present, and combined with a great product, service, or marketing strategy, leadership has begun and success is going to follow. However, one of the most important facets of leadership is the leader's ability to execute.

Execution originates in decisiveness, but must include the ability to follow through on all aspects of that decision, long after the initial excitement of the moment has passed. Generally speaking, leaders make quick decisions and stay with them long-term. Non-leaders take a long time to make decisions, then shortly after, pull back from fully implementing what they have decided upon.

This is not to say that leaders never change their mind. Everyone has the right to change their mind, and surely a leader must claim that right whenever necessary. But leaders change their mind not because of fear, but rather because of new intuition, or insight. New challenges can occur, and may get in the way of execution, yet a leader is proactive and solution-oriented, rather than reactive and problem-oriented.

Objectivity is the ability to see things as they are, including one's self. It must go hand in hand with allowing oneself to create solutions when necessary. A leader is very objective, very open, when it comes to noticing his or her shortcomings. They are unafraid of looking objectively because they know that their shortcomings don't define who they are. Rather, they are what she or he must choose to work on, within.

Therefore, objective leaders are self-correctors. They are their own best students. To be a self-corrector is not the same as undergoing self-criticism, or self-judgment. It is a process of maintaining clarity, not slowing down for blame. Self criticism gets in the way of self correction because it further clouds the mind of the individual, blocking the clarity that is required for being an effective self corrector.

A leader's deepest loyalty is to his or her vision. Second is their loyalty to remaining patient while pursuing that vision. Third is one's loyalty to others who are inspired to be part of fulfilling that vision. Within true loyalty there is no room for guilt. Those who try to secure the loyalty of others based on fear and guilt are not true leaders. Quite the contrary, the essence of loyalty is found in love, trust, and the empowerment of others who are part of the vision.

A true leader will never confuse leadership with aggressive selfishness. Although this is often a path to leadership, it leads to achievement that carries with it emptiness and despair. Aggressive and selfish leadership is like placing a ladder alongside a tower, climbing up, and finding desolation. The Principle of Leadership says that a leader can and should strive to climb a ladder that is rooted and stabilized by vision, execution, objectivity, and loyalty. Once reaching the top of this ladder, the leader will find it to be leaning upon the tower of fulfillment.

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About the Author

Dr. Ellie Drake Savvy businesswoman, doctor, in-demand motivational speaker, mother and an inspiration to men and women around the globe. She maintains a demanding schedule of personal appearances as well as a series of web sites, each offering insights and products designed to help individuals achieve their personal best. Ellie Drake is down to earth and funny! Visit [Be a Millionaire Success](#)