



**LEADING.**  
**MULTITUDES,**  
**MOVING**  
**MOUNTAINS**

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**LEADERSHIP**  
*in the* **21st Century**  
● *by Chelsea Greenwood*

**IT MAY BE TRICKY TO PUT YOUR FINGER ON, BUT YOU KNOW IT WHEN YOU FEEL IT. A FORCE AS STRONG AS GRAVITY THAT GUIDES YOU, PROPELS YOU AND INSPIRES YOU: LEADERSHIP. IT HAS EXISTED SINCE THE DAWN OF MAN, YET MODERN MINDS STILL STRUGGLE TO DEFINE IT. "LEADERSHIP IS THE MOST OBSERVED AND LEAST UNDERSTOOD PHENOMENON ON EARTH," WRITES POLITICAL HISTORIAN JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS IN LEADERSHIP.**

What is it that makes the Roosevelts, Gandhis and Churchills of the world so powerful? What do they possess that allows them to lead multitudes and move mountains? And is such leadership inherent, or can it be learned? Early studies focused on the traits of successful leaders, believing that such personalities were cut from a different cloth. But, in *Leaders Who Transform Society: What Drives Them and Why We Are Attracted*, Micha Popper writes, "Perhaps the reverse is true, leaders are like everybody else, but they behave in a way that has powerful influence on others."

Indeed, contemporary research has shifted toward examining leadership *behavior*, instead: What practices do leaders execute daily, monthly and yearly to achieve success? Here, top leadership experts nationwide weigh in on that question, drawing from years of meticulous research and personal experience. Read on and learn how to become a more effective, admirable and dynamic leader—starting now.

### **1. ESTABLISH A VISION.**

If you're going to lead others, choose a final destination that's worth the journey. "Great leaders see outcomes that are worthy of people's efforts," says Flip Flippen, psychotherapist, executive coach and author of the best-seller *The Flip Side*. "By worthy, I'm not talking about money.... I'm looking at things that are important, that make contributions to people, to society, to life."

This vision should unify your team and give it purpose as everyone channels their efforts into making this singular dream a reality. "People need vision," writes leadership expert Ken Blanchard in *The Heart of a Leader: Insights on the Art of Influence*. "During times of growth, change, opportunity or uncertainty, a vision keeps us heading in the right direction."



Flip Flippen



Once you've established your vision, determine how to achieve it. Best-selling author John C. Maxwell says, "Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course." (This is Law No. 4 in his *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*.)

"[Leaders] see the whole trip in their minds before they leave the dock," he writes. "They have vision for getting to their destination, they understand what it will take to get there, they know who they'll need on the team to be successful, and they recognize the obstacles long before they appear on the horizon."

### **2. GET YOUR EGO IN CHECK.**

The days of the tyrannical CEO presiding over his evil empire are long gone. Today's effective leader is humble, yet no less driven. In his smash hit *Good to Great*, Jim Collins examines how certain companies made the jump described in the title—rising from mediocrity to a sustained level of extraordinary success. In all of the "great" companies researched, the leader in charge during the acceleration toward success was what he classifies as "Level 5."

"Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building

John C. Maxwell

## LEADING LESSONS

The knowledge and experience of history's greatest leaders are as relevant today as ever.

### WINSTON CHURCHILL

**Leading lesson:** Even in the face of a seemingly unbeatable evil, Churchill never buckled and considered victory his only option.

**In his words:** "It was the nation and the race dwelling all around the globe that had the lion's heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar."

### MAHATMA GANDHI

**Leading lesson:** He first gained the people's loyalty, and then he persuaded them to embrace his vision.

**In his words:** "If I also, perhaps, stood before the prospect of finding myself in a minority of one voice, I humbly believe that I would have

the courage to remain in such a hopeless minority. This is, for me, the only truthful position."

### MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

**Leading lesson:** Despite the personal danger that grew with his rising influence, King continued to spread his message and fight for his cause.

**In his words:** "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**Leading lesson:** He was humble, yet had unshakable self-confidence, which allowed him to empower those around him.

**In his words:** "I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on Earth, I shall at least have

one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me."

### FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

**Leading lesson:** He never faltered in the face of a daunting challenge, whether polio or the Great Depression.

**In his words:** "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

### THEODORE ROOSEVELT

**Leading lesson:** He was a man of action who made his own rules and strived to continually improve himself—both physically and intellectually.

**In his words:** "I care not what others think of what I do, but I care very much about what I think of what I do: That is character!"

Sources: *Leadership Through the Ages: A Collection of Favorite Quotations and* bartleby.com

a great company," Collins writes. "They are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves."

Leaders who don't hold the company as their top priority weaken it, says Stedman Graham, educator, author and businessman: "Where leaders make mistakes is when they start operating out of the ego and think they're somebody special.... They get confused and off track. Things don't get done, and a lot of productivity is lost."

### 3. SERVE OTHERS.

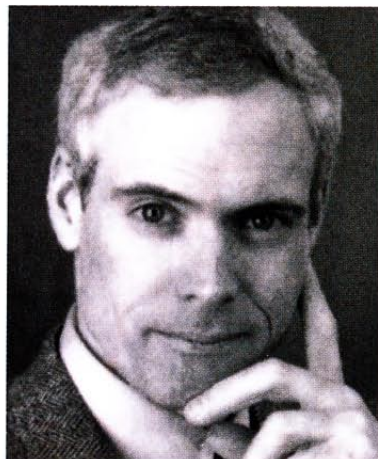
This step has two components: external and internal. As mentioned earlier, ensure that your overall vision for the company is a worthy one that will meet a need

and improve people's quality of life. In this way, you serve those outside your company.

To serve those inside it, become a servant leader (a phrase defined by Robert Greenleaf): One who strives to fulfill the needs of those whom he or she leads. Blanchard illustrates the concept with the following metaphor in *Heart of a Leader*. "The flock is not there for the sake of the shepherd; the shepherd is there for the sake of the flock."

Achieving this level of leadership, which Graham considers the highest and says is quite rare, requires breaking down the walls between boss and employee—something that isn't taught in most MBA programs.

"I love—not only like or respect—my team," says Flippen, whose Flippen Group provides leadership training to companies, sports teams and school districts. "I'm not bashful about hugging them, encouraging them, about celebrating their successes.



Jim Collins

I want to know what's going on in their families; I want to know how their life is; I want to know what they need."

The result is that Flippen has very low turnover, spends nothing on recruitment (thanks to word-of-mouth), has high productivity and experiences the "sheer, unmitigated joy of being around people who love me, respect me and want to be with me," he says.



Ken Blanchard

#### 4. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

It's easy to take credit for success—but a great leader takes credit for failure more often, writes Collins. In *Good to Great*, he identifies a pattern called "the window and the mirror."

He says, "Level 5 leaders look out the window to apportion credit to factors outside themselves when things go well (and if they cannot find a specific person or event to give credit to, they credit good luck). At the same time, they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility, never blaming bad luck when things go poorly."

Flippen likes to tell the story of a Southwest Airlines employee in charge of certifying pilots. Whenever he interviewed a candidate, he would lead them

by some trash he had left on the ground. "If they picked it up, they passed the test. It wasn't [the pilot's] trash... but he saw something that was wrong, and he took responsibility and did something about it," Flippen says.

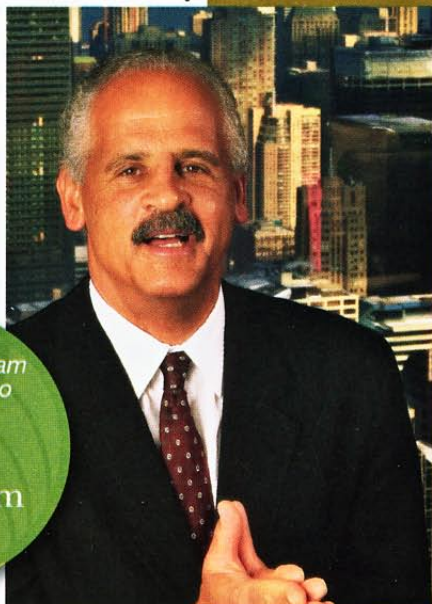
That kind of initiative is imperative in becoming a leader, he says. "It's high-performance. If you're waiting for somebody to tell you what's broken, you'll never be in a senior leadership position. If you need to be told, then I've got to pay somebody to tell you."

#### 5. LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

When it comes to setting an example, Scott Blanchard—son of Ken and an executive vice president at The Ken Blanchard Companies—repeats a quote by Mahatma Gandhi: "We must become the change we want to see."

"It sounds very simple, but it's incredibly true," Blanchard says. "The best leaders understand that people are keenly observing them, and they're aware that people believe what they see and not necessarily what they hear. So the best leaders are true examples."

Maxwell echoes this sentiment with his Law No. 13: "The Law of the Picture: People Do What People See." He explains that "the leader's effective modeling of the vision makes the picture come alive."



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## LEAD YOURSELF FIRST ●●

**Before you can lead others, master the art of self-leadership.**

"The most important ingredient in leadership is self-leadership," says Stedman Graham. "And the question is, 'Can you lead yourself? Do you have the discipline to create the habits that will allow you to improve upon and build something based on consistency and sustainability? Can you do it over and over? Can you do it well? Can you do it enough to make an impact?'"

In his *You Can Make It Happen: A Nine-Step Plan for Success*, Graham's first step is to "Check Your ID," to further one's "self-knowledge and self-understanding."

"It's imperative for leaders to understand who they are, what they're passionate about, what their strengths are, and then to be able to create a process or methodology for carrying out those things that need to be carried out, based on their intentions and based on their vision," he says.

Take some time to assess where you are in your career, where you'd like to be and when. Determine what you'll need to get there, and be realistic about what skills or experience are necessary for reaching that goal. If you can learn such skills, then plot out how to do so; if such skills are not innate, consider that

your goal may not be right for you. Then, periodically revisit your goals to see if you're on the right track. Be firm about your commitment, but also be open to change.

"A leader has to grow and improve, because the world keeps changing... and you have to evolve, develop, create, innovate and reinvent sometimes to be an effective leader," Graham says.

Stedman Graham



Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's actions after 9/11 are a perfect example of this, Maxwell says: "Giuliani's example of leadership, strength and resilience inspired the nation. In many ways, people all over the United States learned how to conduct themselves in a post-9/11 world by watching Rudolph Giuliani's modeling."

## **6. HAVE A REALITY CHECK.**

"The No. 1 job of a leader is to basically acknowledge reality and to create a clear picture of how we're going to deal with reality," says Scott Blanchard, whether the "reality" in question is a general lack of progress, some looming threat or a sudden catastrophe. "The best leaders are the ones who talk about what other people are thinking about and what they're fearful of, and they demystify it. They're very clear in their approach in terms of what they're going to do about it."

This may be difficult for some leaders, especially given today's economic climate, but it's more important now than ever. Frankly and publicly addressing a problem—and sharing a solution—shows employees that you're on top of the situation, that you

acknowledge and care about their concerns, and that you're capable of adapting to changing times.

In *Good to Great*, Collins encourages leaders to "create a culture wherein people have a tremendous opportunity to be heard and, ultimately, for the truth to be heard."

## **7. DON'T QUIT.**

This final behavior is the most straightforward of the bunch: No matter what happens or how bumpy the road gets, never, ever, give up. "Persistence means sticking to your guns," writes Ken Blanchard in *Heart of a Leader*. "It's keeping your commitment and making your actions consistent with your word. It's all about 'walking your talk.'"

Flippen says that whether you're looking at athletes or businesspeople, it's easy to separate the quitters from the real leaders. "They have high endurance. They can just stay on it, stay on it, stay on it," he says. "They stay in the pool longer. When everyone else has gone home, the light in their office is still on.... Those are the people who impact the world." **S**