

IDEAS 11

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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THIS IS NOT A SPIDER STORY

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In Spiderman, when Uncle Ben told his nephew Peter Parker the words: with great power comes great responsibility, he was just expressing his own version of Jesus' own words in the Scriptures, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." (Luke 12:48, New American Standard Bible, 1995). This goes to show how leadership is a gift and not a privilege. Even the late President Corazon Aquino had said the same thing herself.

People who have been cast into positions of power probably need to take this as a serious mantra in their leadership careers. The trust that they are ultimately given by the people who have made them occupy those seats need to be safeguarded with their own lives. Sadly and frankly speaking, most if not all leaders fail to regard the very essence of their posts as something akin to holding a fragile object in their hands. For these types of leaders, the what-are-we-in-power-for syndrome is a malady that fails to find a cure. This is probably why we are fixated about introducing speakers thus: blah-blah-blah, let's all welcome the former president XXXX, ex-mayor so-and-so, ex-barangay chairman XYZ. Honor is directly equated with power.

Influence runs deep for people associated with those in power, or so, they want to believe. This is best illustrated by habitual name-dropping and emphasis on associations. It's an unfortunate thing that leaders' reputations are often tarnished not because of something they have personally done, but because of what their relatives and friends tend to do because of the perceived connections-to-the-powers-that-be which they flaunt so well.

A leader is easily the target of gossip because he is a public figure. He is scrutinized no matter how well he tries to guard his privacy. It is therefore upon him to live a life worth emulating by his constituents. This should not be misconstrued as a call to BE perfect; everyone knows nobody can ever be that. But it should be an objective of every great leader: to lead by example, to govern fairly, to dispense of his duties in the best and wisest possible way. Not everyone can be as wise as Solomon, but every leader should strive to regard his oath as something as sacred as a marriage vow. His obligations lie not elsewhere but in the people he leads, his words before people are not mere rhetoric, his actions are not mere objects of entertainment or a means of grandstanding. He has to take his position as a divine responsibility.

Leadership is not something anyone can take lightly—it is a heavy responsibility that the weaker, self-serving ones will not be able to carry too well. Leadership is to be viewed as God's own way of calling those in power to make the lives of his most intelligent creations better, so that those lives become fitting tributes to the Great Maker Himself. Vox populi, vox Dei.

Questions for discussion:

1. What, to you, is a great leader? In your opinion, who have been good examples of true leadership?
2. Do you think anyone can be a great leader? Why or why not?
3. If you could be the president/prime minister of your own country for a day, what would be the first thing you would do?
4. How can people help their leaders govern well? Should leadership be a responsibility shared by constituents as well? Justify your answer.
5. In your opinion, what should leaders in these times focus on? (example answers: education, jobs creation, infrastructure, etc) Why do you think so? See More



LEADERSHIP-A QUALITY ABOVE ALL

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A very broad and multi-faceted term is what embodies leadership per se. Can we also say that it is tantamount to being successful? It is a very distinct quality that is innate in every human being. It is an inherent ability that every individual possess, whether it be good or bad. It has many aspects yet it agrees that a leader is one whose magnetic personality galvanizes people for some cause. They have not only this aura but charisma that arouses the awareness of their followers. Great leaders influence their followers not by words but by their actions. They walk what they preach and serve as catalyst, for their presence is enough to motivate and influence the people. In my opinion, I do not think that we can single out a definition for leadership.

As William Shakespeare said, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Yes, we can agree on this fact that some people are born leaders as God has designated a person to be. Take the example of the Bible characters like Moses, Joseph and David, who very well describes that they were chosen by God to be a leader of His people. If you will delve into each of their characters, nobody's life was exemplary but they were made commendable by God. Thus, one can say that born leaders have that inner compulsion or urge which drive them to accomplish great tasks. Some achieve greatness is groomed in a discipline to acquire leadership qualities. Then, towards this specific purpose or goal, some have imbued a kind of discipline to acquire leadership qualities. As the Scripture says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way that it should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Apart from the innate qualities of leadership, these things should be inculcated in one's mind, courage, initiative, drive, a sense of responsibility and impartiality, not only having that special skill but also having that wisdom, intelligence and be conscientious.

A good leader avoids procrastination and always displays their abilities and intelligence to make apt and appropriate decisions for that matter. He is able to withstand and face tough challenges and complex situations in life. Some leaders become perverted when they acquire fame and power. They become so obsessed with their power that they tend to forget their humble beginnings and virtually become a dictator. Hitler was a living example of a dictator who was tyrannical and self-possessed. True leadership then is not allowing oneself to be overwhelmed by his status. A leader should be prepared to sacrifice his personal interests for the good of others; therefore a good leader lives for others. Great deeds make great men. A living testimony to this can be found in the person of Mahatma Gandhi, whom others try to emulate because he lived a life of self-denial and hardship. Trust, confidence and being optimistic are the attributes of a good leader.

The bottom line is to be a good leader; you should be a good follower and is always willing and able to learn from his mistakes. Therefore, we in our own right can be good leaders because we have the courage to take challenges and go where no one has gone before. We only have one life to live so we might as well live it to the fullest.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the qualities of being a good leader?
2. Can you qualify yourself as a leader? In what aspect are you one?
3. What are the attributes of good leadership?
4. Can we consider all the prominent people to be good leaders? Explain your answer.
5. Leaders should be capable of taking risks, so how can you explain the saying, "The higher the risk, the higher is the gain"?



GOOD LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

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Leadership is a very broad concept. One is expected to use their behavioral skills so as to inspire the people around you and eventually winning their trust and respect. So when we talk about good leadership qualities, we tend to refer to the basic human traits such as honesty, sincerity, courage and determination, all of which make up the characteristic of a good leader. When we talk of leadership, there is a certain range of characteristics that makes a person stand out among his peers. Therefore, as a leader, one is expected to motivate, inspire and lead people. This will only take effect if a person has all the good leadership skills that he needs.

The characteristics of a leader play a vital role in the kind of leadership a person asserts. This can be developed through learning and experience but those who have an inborn ability to lead, make good leaders which inevitably leads to successful leadership. If you are in a leading position, it requires a set of abilities. According to Napoleon Bonaparte, "A leader is a dealer in hope." Hence when leaders are chosen, they would want them to live up to their expectations. A lot of hopes are pinned on them to bring about radical change and reform. To have effective leadership, it is essential for them to display few characteristics of good leaders.

For one, the most important characteristic is self leadership-this is true when a leader leads himself towards excellence, then he would be able to lead his followers on the same path. It also follows that he should have enthusiasm, thus, inspiring those around him with his passion and dedication. A true leader cannot exist if he cannot win the trust of others (then we talk about setting leadership principles, i.e., integrity and honesty) A good leader practices what he or she preaches leading others to follow him, so he should be trustworthy. An essential trait of a good leader is believing in their own abilities, having that confidence to lead effectively. A leader must prove to be orderly (which gives security to the people around him) in times of uncertainty and stress. Amidst many challenges and crisis that may arise along the way, a leader should be calm and be able to maintain his composure. The one who maintains and have a cool head in times of need is a great leader. A good leader should be highly knowledgeable with regards to his field of work and should serve as an inspiration to his followers.

Moreover, he should have an analytic mind too, keeping the main goal in focus. He should also be able to motivate his followers to work as a team, ready to bond with them, anticipate the future and work with a vision (for the achievement of their common goals). He does not demand or command respect for he earns it. Among other qualities, a good leader should also have a good sense of humor, because after all, they say that laughter is the best medicine. A vital leadership trait of a good leader is to have effective communication, meaning he should be willing to accept relevant suggestions from his subordinates; having the ability to listen, question, analyze and observe effectively. A true leader would always have high standards and he will always strive for excellence in every aspect. A characteristic of a good leader is to have that positive attitude even in the worst situations to successfully overcome challenges that they may encounter. To top them all, to make a good leader is to be passionate in the work that he does. Whether these characteristics are natural or developed, a great leader will always work to the best of these traits in order to achieve excellence. Good leaders therefore are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills and NOT only resting on their laurels.

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you think good leaders are born not made or is it vice-versa? Support your answer.
2. Among these characteristics, which do you think is very plausible?
3. Are all of these traits on how to be a good leader attainable?
4. How many of these characteristics are inherent in us and what are they?
5. Can radical change be achieved having only five of these traits? How?



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