

# **Leadership for Legal Professionals**

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## I. What is Leadership?

### A. What others have said

1. "Getting in touch with your true self must be your first priority." Tom Hopkins
2. "Be a first rate version of yourself, not a second rate version of someone else." Judy Garland
3. "We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them." Abigail Adams
4. "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Warren G. Bennis
5. "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." John D. Rockefeller
6. "High expectations are the key to everything." Sam Walton
7. "Effective leadership is putting first things first." Steven Covey
8. "Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right." Jane Goodall
9. "A [person] who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd." Max Lucado
10. "We're here for a reason. I believe a bit of the reason is to throw little torches out to lead people through the dark." Whoopi Goldberg
11. "If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade." Tom Peters
12. "Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself." Eleanor Roosevelt

### B. Examples of different forms and styles of leadership

[John Adams -- breaking from the British; making peace with the French]

[President Obama -- Osama bin Laden]

[President Reagan -- the Evil Empire]

[Captain Sullenberger -- decided to ditch; "brace for impact"]

[Ben Carson, M.D. -- Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery, Johns Hopkins]

[Examples from participants]

C. Understand the consequences of poor leadership in an organization:

[At the heart of organizational toxicity lies the combination of fear, guilt, power and control. People use those attributes to manipulate others. The result is a toxic and dysfunctional environment.]

## II. Leadership as a Way of Being

A. Embody the ART -- it is what people expect

1. Be authentic

- a. Be genuine, be real
- b. Be yourself
- c. Do not try to be someone else

2. Be responsible

- a. We are responsible for what we can change

[Demonstration: The \$20 bill]

[Example: Johnson & Johnson in the 1980s]

- b. Be responsible for yourself and your impact on other people
- c. Take responsibility for your choices and decisions
- d. Acknowledge mistakes promptly without defensiveness or blame

3. Be transparent
  - a. Be open and honest
    - i. Always tell the truth
    - ii. If you are in a situation where you cannot tell the whole truth, say so
  - b. Exemplify integrity
- B. Understand that trust lies at the heart of every relationship
  1. A leader who is not trusted can only lead through fear
  2. Leadership through fear stifles creativity, interferes with healthy risk-taking, and limits the flow of information
- C. Understand that people have a basic human need to be treated with dignity and respect
  1. Each person has intrinsic value as a human being
  2. Several positive leadership behaviors flow from this understanding

[Group Discussion: What behaviors inspire trust?  
What behaviors undermine trust?]
- D. Remember the *RELICS*
  1. Be *receptive*, and not reactive
    - a. Are you open to new ideas and different points of view?
    - b. Can you withhold judgment and refrain from criticizing?
    - c. Taking opinions and suggestions seriously will encourage more participation and ownership
  2. *Empower*, and never embarrass
    - a. Encourage people to bring their unique talents to the task
    - b. Create an environment in which people feel safe to take reasonable risks and to make mistakes

- c. Understand that embarrassing a person is a theft of the person's self-respect
  - i. Communicate criticism in private, whenever possible
  - ii. Critique the behavior, not the person

3. *Listen*, and avoid the lecture

- a. Regard listening as an opportunity to understand what the other person is really saying
  - i. Avoid interrupting
  - ii. Avoid distractions
  - iii. While the other person is talking, avoid thinking about what you are going to say next
- b. People want to feel they are heard
- c. Resist the temptation to show people how much you know -- remember that effective leadership is not about you

4. *Inspire*, rather than intimidate

- a. Inspiration brings out the best in people; intimidation instills fear and resentment

[The Ball of String]

- b. The most important function of a leader is to help the people on the team be all they can be while striving together to achieve the team's goal(s)

5. Be *caring*, rather than callous

- a. The people you lead are entrusted to your care
- b. The people you lead are not "assets" or simply a means to an end; don't objectify them
- c. Show that you care -- when a person on your team has an important life event, do you send a card or do you show up?

6. Be *steady*, rather than scattered

- a. Show that you have confidence in the course of action you propose
- b. Communicate risks in a balanced way
- c. Prioritize conflicting goals, and lead the team towards the priority goal without ignoring the other goals
- d. Be reasonably consistent in your expectations and your messages to the team unless the situation fundamentally changes
- e. Avoid creating the impression that you are covering your bases to protect yourself if something goes wrong
- f. Don't let yourself get thrown off-balance by adversity or unexpected events
- g. If things go wrong, don't re-hash the past and play the blame game; focus on what we are going to do now

#### E. Suggested reading

Kevin Cushman, Leadership from the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life

Joseph Jaworski, Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership

Peter Koestenbaum, The Inner Side of Greatness: A Philosophy of Leadership

### III. Assembling and Leading an Effective Team

#### A. Understand, value and accommodate differences

##### 1. People have different communication styles

###### a. Personal differences

[Example: Concepts vs. Data]

[Example: Direct vs. Indirect]

[Example: Contextual vs. Bottom Line]

###### b. Cultural differences

[Group Discussion: Examples]

c. Gender-based differences

[Group Discussion: Examples]

2. People have different values, hopes, dreams, fears and motivations
3. People have different gifts

[Resource: [www.strengthsfinder.com](http://www.strengthsfinder.com)]

4. People have different ways of perceiving the world and making decisions

[Resource: Myers-Briggs Personality Types]

[Illustration]

[Note: Most non-lawyers are not like most lawyers in this respect]

5. People have different ways of processing information

[Exercise: The Ways We Think]

[Illustration]

[Resource: [www.benziger.org](http://www.benziger.org)]

B. Understand how the brain works

1. Every decision a person makes has an emotional component
2. The executive function of the brain is off-line while a person is emotionally over-activated
3. Don't try to reason with a person while they are emotionally over-activated
4. The "fight or flight" response triggered by fear or a sense of danger overrides all other cognitive functions

C. Understand yourself

1. What are your personal values, hopes, dreams, fears and motivations?

2. What are your “hot buttons” or “trigger points,” and how quickly do you know when they are activated?
3. Do you let your “old movies” affect your perceptions of situations and other people?
4. How do you communicate with other people?
5. How do you prefer that other people communicate with you?
6. How do you process information?
7. How do you make decisions?
  - a. What type(s) of information do you need before making a decision?
  - b. How much information do you need before making a decision?

[Example: Colin Powell]

- c. What is your relationship with risk?
  8. What are your strengths?
  9. What are your weaknesses or blind spots?
- D. When assembling a team, match the talents with the roles
1. Consider your own strengths and weaknesses
  2. Make sure all required competencies are represented on the team

#### IV. Effective Leadership Behaviors

- A. Create a clear vision of the goal(s)
1. Be bold and innovative
  2. Don't settle for less
  3. Keep the goal(s) clearly in mind
- B. Communicate the goal(s) and individual assignments clearly

- C. Put your ego aside and focus on the team and its goal(s)
- D. Stay true to your values
- E. Never ask a team member to compromise his or her integrity
- F. Listen
- G. Address team members' concerns and let them know how you have addressed the concerns
- H. Keep the team informed
- I. Stay as positive and energized as you can
- J. Avoid playing favorites
- K. Pay attention to clues about boundaries and respect those boundaries

[Example: Late Night Calls]

[Example: Vacation Calls]

- L. Address performance issues and problems in interpersonal relationships promptly, directly and honestly
- M. When you find yourself in a reactive state, get support and be open to constructive feedback
- N. Maintain a "can-do" attitude, and never give up