

THE POWER OF VISION

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There has been a lot of controversy about what talent or skill makes a person a great leader. I have read dozens of articles and everyone has their own view. One says that communication skills are the key to being a leader, but of course he works for a company which provides training in the communication skills. As for me, I believe it is something deeper, perhaps something which can not be taught, vision.

Can you teach someone to believe something? Can you teach someone to hope? Can you teach someone to look beyond what is to what could be? Can you teach someone how to have a burning desire for something or is that something deep down inside?

I will leave those debates to the psychologist and philosophers. My only point is that vision makes the great leaders, not communication skills, not planning skills, or the others. They may help, but the center, the key is vision. Let's look at history as a proof.

Everyone considers Alexander the Great as a great leader, but he lacked good communication skills. In fact, because of his poor communication skills there were three mutinies or revolts during his short life. The only thing that kept things together was his presence and his vision. That inspired his men to keep following him,

You will say that presence is the key to being a great leader, but where does the presence come from? If you do not have a burning vision for what could be, do you have a presence? Examine all the people who are known to have presence. Every one of them has a burning vision within them. Some only have a vision for themselves, but they have a burning vision.

Well, what about planning, organizational skills? Let's look at a couple of business leaders to decide. Look at Fred Maytag, the founder of Maytag. He was not very organized, according to the standards set by training companies. He was always starting something new, while still in a current project. Mr. Maytag did have something else though he had a vision for his company. That vision inspired everyone else.

The same is true for Henry Ford. His vision for Ford Motor Company inspired thousands to follow him. He was not known for his organizational skills, he was known for his vision.

Ok, so it is not communication skills or organizational skills which make a person a leader, what about a concern for the people? Yes, that does help to make you a 'good' leader, but it does not make you a leader.

Fred Maytag, Henry Ford, Cyrus the Great and others have all been concerned about the people. It made them a good leader, but it did not make them a leader. Look at Hitler, was he concerned about the people, but he was a leader. Another example is Osama Bin Laden, is he concerned about the people? He is a leader. Many follow him, even to their death, but he is not good.

So being concerned about the people will decide if you are considered a good leader or an infamous leader, but it, of its self, will not make you a leader. Look at how many people there are in the world who are concerned about the welfare of other, but they are not leaders.

Therefore, I must conclude that vision is the key to making a person into a leader. The vision must be one that encompasses the whole company or community.

If it is only a personal vision, you will not be a leader. You may inspire yourself to do great things, but you will not inspire others to do great things and after all that is what a leader does. He inspires others to do great things.

Now, the question stands, can vision be taught? I believe that it can. Examining history, we see that people like Alexander the Great had mentors. People who help them find the vision that was deep inside them. People who help define and unlock the power of that vision.

It might be a school teacher, a parent or a professional mentor, but if you do not have a strong burning vision you need someone to help you discover the vision and focus that vision. That is what the businesses need to devote their training time to. They need to develop this vision in their top management to make them leaders then teach them the other skills to make them into good leaders.

What are the benefits? Maytag and Ford are still around, the companies are still there, 100 years later. The leader will help to provide sustainability to the company. If you are good at developing leaders, you will be like Fredrick I and his son Fredrick the Great. You will have generations of leaders and generations of sustained profitability.

The choice is yours, try to develop leaders using the other techniques or go to the root and develop a leader. A report in 2003 by DDI showed that 80% of corporate management were only concerned about themselves. They did not have a vision for the company.

These men and women were well trained in communication skills, time management, planning, etc. The missing link was vision. Is it time to develop a vision in the people you want to lead your company?

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