

“Lead by Example: Reality or Fiction”

Word Count: 762

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Leaders are what drive success in this world; without leaders, the productivity of life would diminish, and therefore the overall quality of living. True leaders that drive success are making desirable movements, thoughts, and decisions. Unfortunately, not many people are truly deserving of the title ‘leader’. If you can’t set an example that is worth emulating to result in maximum success, don’t bother leading the pack. To lead by example is to provide a behavior worthy of emulation, to inspire others, and to hold others and oneself accountable.

Unfortunately, these key components aren’t always met. The idea that good leaders lead by example is irrelevant; good leaders lead by good example is the reality. The assumption that good leaders lead by an example has created a gray trap we as a society can easily fall into. We are stuck in a sea of gray, where the clean white canvas of possibilities has been tinted with little drops of black, diminishing opportunity. Good leaders lead by good example, brightening and enlarging the canvas of possible masterpieces in the world.

Until one can provide a behavior worthy to be emulated by others, they won’t truly be a leader. But what is this behavior? No matter the setting, whether it be work, school, a conference, sporting event, or any other place in the world, there are traits that remain important across the board in becoming a true leader. The most obvious, but no less important than the rest, is that you must be likeable if you are going to be a *successful* leader. If the people you are surrounded by don’t like you, how are they going to look up to you as a leader? While maintaining charisma, successful leaders are able to use their voice to get a point across. One’s voice is like a conductor of a musical ensemble; used for direction, but also must listen carefully in order to give relevant instructions. If a conductor continually told the trumpets to play louder

without paying attention to the music, the song wouldn't be successful; it wouldn't sound right. Similarly, in a global perspective, if a leader isn't paying close attention and giving irrelevant direction, the outcome or product will not be successful. Good leaders don't just lead by example; they lead by providing and demonstrating ideal behaviors.

Leaders do not simply lead by example, but by giving a good example. In order to be setting a good example, one must be inspiring to others around them. Inspired people are motivated people, and motivated people lead to successful outcomes. According to Peter Economy, an author of over 75 books about leadership and management in the business world, inspirational leaders “challenge their people by setting high but attainable standards and expectations, and then giving them the support, tools, training, and latitude to pursue those goals...” (“Peter Economy's Articles | Inc.com.” *Peter Economy's Articles | Inc.com*. 24 Jan. 2014. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.) To crawl out of the gray areas in society, and make positive progress on current issues, leaders must not only lead by example, but lead by setting a good example—one that challenges and inspires their peers, employees, or whomever it may be, while being there as a supporter to aid in their success.

People make mistakes, but as a leader, it is vital to minimize mistakes and recover from them as swiftly as possible. Not only does this require accountability for others around you, but also oneself. If one person makes a mistake, it is the job of the leader to take action in the recovery of whatever mishap occurred. If the leader makes the mistake, they still take that action in recovery. Accountability is this action of taking responsibility. When mistakes happen in a group setting, graying the clean white slate of opportunities, it is the person who can step in,

show responsibility, and take action in restoring the canvases white color that is the leader.

Anyone can lead a group by example, but someone who demonstrates accountability as they lead by good example makes a true leader.

The idea that good leaders lead by example simply doesn't ring true- good leaders lead by *good* example, one that sets a stellar behavioral example, is able to inspire those around them, and practices individual and group accountability. With each of these elements comes an exemplary leader, one who can make a masterpiece out of a clean white slate. If their canvas turns gray, a few strokes of great behavior, sketched in inspiration, and painted on accountability will re-whiten the canvas once again.