

CHALLENGE

A Herff Jones IMPACT Resource For Students

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JUNE CHALLENGE

Becoming A Better Leader

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary defines a leader as "a person who rules or guides or inspires others."

A desire to constantly learn is a primary characteristic of a good leader. Leadership development is important because groups tend to take on the personality of their leaders.

Leadership is the ability to facilitate action and guide change. To lead is to direct, supervise, encourage, inspire, and coordinate. Good leaders develop personal leadership skills and encourages and trains new leaders who will follow. Here are just a few of the important attributes of a good leader:

1. **Enthusiasm**
2. **Understanding**
3. **Emotional stability**
4. **Objectivity**
5. **Flexibility**
6. **Imagination**
7. **Integrity**
8. **Courage**
9. **Commitment**
10. **Passion**
11. **Compassion**
12. **Determination**
13. **Wisdom**

While leadership skills may be easy to explain, leadership is not so easy to practice. Good leaders are followed because people trust and respect them.

The big question is: Are leaders born or made? Many people do not seek to be a leader but situations cause them to become one. For those who desire to be leaders, there are ways to develop those leadership abilities. There are many leadership training seminars and workshops available at the local, state, and national level. There are also summer leadership camps. Ask your adviser for more information.

Leadership can be performed in many different styles. Some leaders have only one style that they are comfortable using while others can adapt their leadership style to any situation.



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As a leader your main goal is to get the job completed. So what do you do?

1. Know the goals and objectives and have a plan on how to achieve them
2. Build a team that is committed to achieving those goals and objectives
3. Help each team member to give their best efforts.

As a leader you must know yourself. What are your strengths and weaknesses?



Building teams is a necessary part of leadership. Also, building good communication skills is critical. So listen, consult, involve and explain why as well as what is being accomplished.

Some leaders lead by example and are very “hands on,” others delegate more. Find your leadership style. Always set high standards.

Catherine the Great said, “Praise loudly, blame softly.” Always give your team credit for the achievements and successes - do not take the credit yourself! You should also take the blame and accept the responsibility for any failures, such as the DJ not showing up for the Homecoming dance. Never publicly blame another for a failure. Their failure is your responsibility. There is no hiding place for a true leader.

As the song says, “**accentuate the positive.**” Express things in terms of what should be done, not what should not be done. If you deal with the negative, others will become negative too. Always have faith in your team that they will accomplish great things. Learn from the people around you and embrace change even if it looks difficult.

Sometimes new administrations at your school see things differently and make changes. Remember as a student leader you can adjust to these changes. Begin to plan by looking at the positives of the change. Also when you talk to the new administration always be prepared and professional.

Jack Welch, a business leader and writer said, “Be open to the best of what everyone, everywhere has to offer. Make

sure everybody counts and everybody knows they count.”



DELEGATION

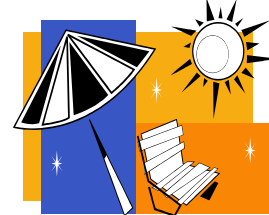
As a leader, you can be overwhelmed with work if you do not learn to delegate. Here are some ideas to help you in this process:

1. Review the tasks for which you have the responsibility. Pick out the ones that can be done by others
2. Select the proper person to do the task. This does not mean the most intelligent person, but the person who is best suited to handle the task
3. Encourage, train, and motivate the person to accept the task
4. Explain the task completely then turn over the job and authority to accomplish it. Talk about the results that are expected and ask questions to be sure that the task to be completed is understood. Sometimes it is very clear to you but makes no sense to the other person
5. Provide support, encourage independence, and help develop confidence
6. Be sure to keep supervisory control, because in the end

you are responsible. Set up a timeline for reporting progress. Be sure that the person understands that you are available for help and advice.

In student activity organizations even if tasks are delegated, the adviser must be available to “open some doors,” such as setting up appointments or making the first phone call. Delegating can decrease the amount of time that it may take to complete a project. It also provides everyone in the organization with leadership training and the development of leadership skills.

HAVE A GREAT
SUMMER!



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