

10 Commandments of Ethical Leadership

Throughout our working careers, we can probably remember bad leaders, good leaders, and excellent leaders. The question is, what made those excellent leaders excellent, and what did they know that the others didn't? More importantly, how can we benefit from their success?

Each of those excellent leaders was probably remembered for different reasons. While they each brought different talents to the table, I'll bet one character trait they all shared was integrity. Because of their work ethic, we trusted them, we respected them and we followed them. This was their competitive advantage.

How's your track record as a leader? Do you have a history of leading dynamic, high-performing teams, or are you more used to unresolved conflict and low morale? If the latter jumps more quickly to mind, then it might be time to take a look at who you are as a leader. In other words, what is the ethical foundation on which you have built your leadership style? What directs your thoughts and guides your behaviours?

"We each have different gifts... if it is leadership, let him govern diligently."
Romans 6

The 10 Commandments of Ethical Leadership identifies the critical principles for being a trusted, respected and powerful leader. For some it may help identify an area that needs strengthening, while for others it may serve as a full-fledged leadership development plan. For everyone, it's a confirmation of how to do the right things right.

I Develop a vision.

"The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but has no vision."
Helen Keller

Do you have a clear direction for your people, or are you wandering in the desert with no particular place to go. People are not interested in following someone who's just taking a walk.

II Characterize integrity.

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Martin Luther King Jr.

When you lead with honesty, guided by good values and strong moral principles, you are secure in your decisions. With security, comes peace.

III Lead the way.

"Well done is better than well said." *Ben Franklin*

Every leader leads by example. The question is whether it's a good example? People respect you for who you are. They trust you for what you do.

IV Esteem insight.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

We each have different gifts and talents and God gives us the tools we need to succeed. Do you know your gifts? Are you using them wisely?

V. Love learning.

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young." *Henry Ford*

You can never know everything. The world is changing so rapidly that yesterday's knowledge is soon obsolete. As a leader, you must love learning and commit to constant personal growth.

VI Guard your heart.

"Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm." *Abraham Lincoln*
If you're a leader and running a popularity race, disappointment is guaranteed. Doing what is right will sometimes make people mad, and you will be the target. Are you ready?

VII Invest wisely.

"The dictionary is the only place success comes before work."
Vince Lombardi

Being a leader isn't a 9 to 5 job and demands come from every direction. There's a price to pay, so know where to invest your resources.

VIII. Exercise humility.

"A great man is always willing to be little." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Why did you want to be a leader in the first place? Now that you've made it, do you remember how you got there? Don't build yourself up on a self-made pedestal of pride, because the higher you go, the harder you'll fall.

IX Leverage loyalty.

"A leader is not an administrator who loves to run others, but someone who carries water for his people so they can get on with their jobs." *Robert Townsend*

If you were to synthesize your duties as a leader, it would be to serve your people. If you don't work for them, they won't work for you.

X. Believe.

"It is a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it." *Somerset Maugham*

Whatever you believe will happen, you will make happen. Faith is the foundation of Ethical Leadership. Without it, everything else crumbles under the slightest pressure. With it, you can soar to new heights.

Maybe you're already anchored in the commandments listed here. If not, choose one that you would most like to strengthen and start there. By following these 10 Commandments of Ethical Leadership you will be well on your way to becoming a trusted, respected and powerful leader. Then there will never be a shortage of those wanting to follow you. This will be your competitive advantage.

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