

Linda Patten

Defining Leadership

Your first step toward becoming
an effective, results-oriented leader



"Becoming a leader is a journey, not an event."

~Linda Patten



Dare 2 Lead with Linda

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Defining Leadership

This eBook focuses on the meaning of leadership as well as the most important traits of great leaders; we start here because the very first step toward becoming an effective, results-oriented leader in virtually any industry is to simply understand what leadership really is.

It is true that you must first have a dream if you want to make a dream come true. If your dream is to develop, manage, and grow an effective, successful sales team while making a real difference in the world, then we must first explore and explain the term “leader.”





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What is a Leader?

What does it mean to be a leader? What are the traits of an effective leader? How can these traits help the people around you to focus, succeed, make more money, and – essentially – make a positive difference?

Great leaders in any business or enterprise possess solid social intelligence, a drive for change, and above all, a vision that allows them to set their sights on the “things” that truly merit attention. The people who can do this are the leaders who truly make positive and powerful changes.





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Some of our society's greatest leaders have very powerful opinions about leadership. For example:

- Warren Bennis, the pioneer in the field of Leadership studies, thinks that “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”
- Founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, says: “As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.”
- Leadership speaker and author, John Maxwell explains that, “Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.” However, he also defines a leader as “one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”
- I think management consultant, Peter Drucker, zeroed in on a very important element of





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leadership when he said, “management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”

- World War II General and United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something that YOU want done because HE wants to do it.”

Eisenhower’s point is so simple, yet it is fundamental and appropriate for all areas of great accomplishment: leading soldiers into battle, gaining a consensus between opposing political parties, or motivating your team to take the necessary actions to be successful.





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When you can help others see the goal AND see the proper path to take to reach that goal, you will be a tremendously successful leader.





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Is it Management or Leadership

Some define leadership as getting work done through others. To me, this is more management than leadership. True, successful leaders wouldn't be successful without the work of the team. However, in today's world, leadership is more about investing in people and trusting that they have the skills to do the work and collaborate with others to accomplish the goal. Today, true leadership has little to do with hierarchy or supreme authority.





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Are Leaders Born or Made

There is also the concept that there are people who believe that leaders are born and not made and are reluctant to step in because of it. In the 4th book in this series, I will explore this concept in more detail. Leadership in tribes and throughout the animal kingdom is often determined through a fight for control, usually to the death or disability of the loser. This concept relies on brute strength and keeping the leadership position only as long as the individual is strong. The tribe follows because the leader is supposed to provide protection, not because the leader accomplishes anything other than being the strongest member of the tribe. This type of leader is





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the “top dog.” This leader is not necessarily concerned about building relationships with members of the tribe or about being a good motivator but rather in maintaining tight control over his subjects.





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Leader as Change Agent

A third way to look at leadership is as making a change to create a better future than the one currently on the horizon. This type of leadership revolves around individuals with the courage and fortitude to take a stand and speak out. Not a conformist, this leader is a change agent. This type of leader does not require a formal position; their motivation is the challenge of making change. Anyone could take up this leadership mantle. There are no right skills and no formal authority needed to take this dare.

An auto manufacturing plant in Northern California possessed a philosophy just like this. The management believed that any employee could be a leader and make





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changes in the production line that would improve productivity and efficiency. Any employee could put together a team to investigate change. Because of this philosophy, employees were able to initiate changes to just-in-time deliveries to the line and the placement of spare tires in the trunks of cars. This took a corporate commitment to facilitate change and stepping up to the task.

Change agents are frequently Reluctant Leaders. These people are “just doing their job,” and just happen to be making a difference.





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Reluctant Leaders

You know who makes up a large portion of Reluctant Leaders? Women.

I find that women also make up a large number of the great change agents as well.

There's a reason for the saying, "Behind every great man is a great woman."

However, I think the more modern variant, "Behind every great man is a supportive and devoted woman to keep his head on straight" is more to the point. In their traditional roll of "support person," women leaders generally started off supporting someone else.





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For example: Eleanor Roosevelt accomplished many things – including chairing the United Nations Human Rights Commission – as the First Lady, a job title that had no substance at the time. And let's not forget the first female President of the United States, Edith Wilson. You know Edith, Woodrow Wilson's wife. She was the one who ran the country while the President recovered from a stroke.

And then there's me. As a Major in the United States Army, I brought together very high powered leaders, including 4-Star Generals, to discuss matters of importance. As this was my job, I didn't see it as leadership. It wasn't until a total stranger in a workshop said to me, "Well, I thought you would lead us in this exercise. It is what I expected of you." Where did she get that idea? Well, it turns out that sometimes





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someone needs to lead the leaders.

Female, male, reluctant, or not, being a strong leader means you ***Hold Yourself to a Higher Standard***. You do the things that others are not willing to do. Abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher said “Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. yourself.” I cannot tell you how valuable this advice is.





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You as a Leader

I congratulate you on doing what you're doing right now. The mere fact that you're reading this and putting in the time and effort to become an effective leader will definitely pay off.

Leaders Take The Initiative. Leaders Do The Work.

Leaders Learn Leadership Skills and then put them into practice.

You can definitely do this. You are a leader.





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If that idea scares you, you are not alone. However, I am sure that from experience you know the difference between good and bad leadership. And, I am willing to bet that you've had a leadership role at some point - either on purpose, by accident, or by force – and that you would do it again.





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Top Leadership Traits

Leadership takes on many different components and factors. Here are the top seven business leadership traits I find most useful and compelling.

Which ones do you possess and which ones could use improvement?

1. **Be Passionate** – When you're excited about your work and your mission, it shows. And it rubs off on others. Passion and positive drive gets things done and empower others. Your team will recognize your sincere passion and enthusiastically join you in getting things done.



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2. **Be Organized** – Reaching your goals requires organization and the knowledge of the exact direction of your business. Disorganization drains your life energy. When you are frazzled, messy, late for meetings, distracted by your phone, or always rushing around, you encourage these traits in others. Being organized and on track is so much more productive for you and your team.
3. **Delegate** – Let's face it. You can't do everything. That's why you have a team. Everything happens because everyone pitches in and does their part. The key element to delegating successfully is giving your people ownership of the work they take on. When they know it's their work and take responsibility for its





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accomplishment, great things happen.

4. **Be Responsible** – Although you've delegated work to others and given your team ownership, as an effective leader, you have to take ownership and responsibility at all times. You're the go-to person. You have their backs. Your team must know that you'll be there for them at all times – when the winds of change loom on the horizon as well as when the sailing is smooth. Your people are responsible for their work; however, you're responsible for the big picture.
5. **Communicate Positively** – It's obvious that outstanding leaders are excellent communicators. Remember that people need affirmation. When you





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communicate to your people that their individual work matters for the creation of the big picture, you are validating their worth to the team. They need positive feedback. They want to know they're doing a good job and they want to hear it from you. So, tell them. Give positive feedback. That's part of being an excellent leader.

6. **Be Focused** – We've all seen leaders who go off on tangents and ramble on, and on. Big problem. Stay focused on the mission at hand. Whether you're giving praise, explaining directions, defining goals and missions, or correcting a team member, say what you need to say and move on. Be positive. Be





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productive. Be concise. Get to the point. And Move On.

- 7. Listen To Your People** – All of these points are vital. And if you don't know what is going on, you will not have a team to lead. Listening is the key to knowing what's going on. Not just in the business but in the lives of your people. Listen to what they have to say and provide a supportive ear. You're not there to solve personal problems; instead, listen and provide positive, productive, and supportive feedback. Your people will appreciate your consideration and be more motivated than ever to be productive and help each other achieve your goals.





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Going Overboard

As much as these traits are vital for positive leadership, it is possible to go overboard with all of them:

- Overly passionate can seem false and is regularly annoying.
- You do not want to organize yourself out of enjoying the process.
- Similarly, too much focus can also be a buzz kill.
- When delegating and asking for input, remember that ultimately the buck does stop with you.



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- Finally, being responsible does not mean you can't play hooky every now and again – if you can't cut loose occasionally and recharge your own batteries, then this vision your leading towards become more of a chore.

So, there you have it. The traits and characteristics of a good leader are simple and doable. When you're open to learning along the way and working with your team, instead of dictating to them, most people are happy to join you on the journey and help the team to attain your combined vision.





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Want More?

There are multiple ways you can dive deeper into the subject of leadership with Linda.

- ✿ Do you wonder if you're a leader? Take this brief assessment, listen to the recording and then schedule 30-minutes on the phone with Linda to discuss your reactions and results with Linda. Click [here](#) to get the assessment.
- ✿ Listen in to Linda's weekly Leadership Stars radio show. Linda features real leaders, especially recognized leaders in network marketing, entrepreneurship,





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and government, who share what is different about and important to know in creating and leading strong teams. These leaders will share their beliefs about building relationships with their teams and how that leads to success for everyone. They have key insights and tips on the “how” of leadership. New shows air every Monday morning at 10am PT. Replays of all her shows are also available. [Listen here](#)

- ✿ Get a Leadership Coach in your pocket once a week for 52 weeks to inspire you, cheerlead you on, and give you practical tips on leadership skills. [Learn more here.](#)





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- ✿ For people who love the feel and smell of real books, she has several best-selling books available. [Find out more here](#)
- ✿ This is just the first in a series of eBooks on Leadership. [Click here](#) to get notified when additional ebooks become available
- ✿ Check out Linda's website: <http://dare2leadwithlinda.com/>





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About Linda





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An accomplished leader, speaker, successful entrepreneur, best-selling author, and gifted communicator, Linda Patten has trained thousands of men and women to step into their natural leadership roles, build their success, and achieve their dreams.

With 40 years of leadership experience spanning the military (including protocol officer to a 4-star general), corporate, entrepreneurial and network marketing arenas, Linda captivates her audiences with her wisdom, inspiration and practical takeaways.

She cut her teeth as a speaker at age 7, and as a young adult was selected as a speaker for the US Army Speaking Team. Linda now is known for her high-caliber interactive keynotes, trainings and programs, and appears regularly on radio and TV





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to share her heartfelt vision of empowering women to step up, step out, and step into leadership in their lives.

Linda is the creator of several powerful leadership training programs including: Seeds of a Movement Bootcamp, Awaken the Leader Within 1-year program, Leverage the Leader Within advanced leadership program, and The Art of Herding Cats: Leading Teams of Leaders, a 12-step self-guided program that transcends reluctant leaders into powerfully successful leaders. She is also founder and CEO of Dare2Lead With Linda and Waynefleete Event Planning.