What Makes an Effective Leader?

Leadership is a matter of abilities and skills that are learned.

It can be defined as the performance of acts that:

1) enable a group or organization to set and reach its goals,
2) maintain itself in good working order, and,
3) enables a group or organization to adapt to internal and external changes.

The performance of these acts is called group functions. It is important, however, to distinguish between leadership and a leader, who is one who performs the acts of leadership. A leader is a focal person whose contributions to the accomplishments of the group’s goals can be significantly greater than the individual contributions of the group as a whole.

Assets for the Responsibility of Leadership:

• Openness to persons and ideas
• Honesty in speech and relationships
• Firmness / Flexibility when it is appropriate
• Belief that what you are doing is important enough to give it your best effort
• A sense of humor
• The ability to risk, both in activities and relationships.
• Realistic expectations about what you can do and about what you can expect others to do
• Respect for the other members of the group as individuals of dignity and worth

Personal Skills Needed for Effective Leadership:

• Listening to what is being said, how it is said and what is not said
• Affirming/Supporting of organization members
• Enabling through group process individuals to develop their skills as well as growth in the organization
• Approachability

Functional Skills for Effective Leadership:

• Planning - organization; in advance
• Gatekeeping - making sure that everyone who wants to be involved is involved
• Resourcing - knowing what is available and how to get it
• Selecting and Calendaring - prioritizing
• Advising - providing knowledge, skills and advice as appropriate
• Seeing the "whole picture"
Leadership Evaluation Questions

How do I define leadership?

What are my expectations of myself as an officer?

What are my expectations of my fellow officers?

What do I see as the goals of the officers?

How do I understand my part in implementing the goals?

What do I see as the goals for the organization?

How do I understand my part in implementing the goals?

Leadership Feedback Questions

1) Do I help others express their ideas?

2) Do I listen alertly and with understanding to what others are saying?

3) Do I communicate my ideas well?

4) Do I avoid conflict when I shouldn't?

5) Am I overly stubborn about my opinions?

6) Do I often provide leadership for my team?

7) Do I seek and use other people's ideas well?

8) Am I overly aggressive?

9) Do I give in too quickly when I'm opposed?

10) Am I sensitive to the feelings of others?

11) Do I take responsibility readily?

12) Am I more often disruptive than constructive?

13) Am I too quiet?

14) Do I participate enough?

15) Do I appear to believe people?

16) Am I tolerant of opposition viewpoints?

17) Do I dominate conversation?

18) Do I appear willing to support other people's ideas?

19) Do I "own" my ideas and feelings?

20) Do I willingly admit when I am wrong?
Building an Effective Group

B  BELIEVE...in what you are doing. Your willingness to risk involvement and participate provides a role model for all the others in the group to follow. Believe that what you are doing is worthwhile and meaningful.

U  UNDERSTAND...that each person is allowed the freedom to participate or pass. No one should be forced or coerced into doing something that makes them feel uncomfortable.

I  INVOLVE...everyone who wants to be! People are diverse with a variety of talents and gifts. Provide them with opportunities to develop and use them.

L  LEAD...just do it! You will never learn leadership until you practice it. And recognize that you are in a learning process...learn from mistakes as well as successes, and develop your own personal leadership style.

D  DESCRIBE...clearly and concisely. Present directions specifically and simply. Review instructions and plans. Have it clear in your own mind so that you can communicate it effectively to others...and always allow for questions!

I  IMAGINE...possibilities! Be flexible...allow for freedom for group members to be creative.

N  NEEDS...be sensitive to the needs of yourself and others. Effective leadership is the ability to sense the needs of the group. And group needs are not static...they are constantly in a state of change.

G  GROW...from experiences. Growing involves becoming. Be open to positive as well as painful experiences. They both create opportunities for growth, both personal as well as group.

Delegation

I. The general responsibilities of a leader are:
   • to promote group goals and process without dominating,
   • to help people interact with each other in positive ways,
   • to keep the group task-oriented,
   • promote a climate of acceptance and openness, and,
   • to know when to provide a sense of closure.

II. Effective delegation is an important tool of leadership.
   Delegation is defined by Webster's as: "To entrust authority to a deputy."

III. Why don't we delegate?
   • Fear
   • Distrust
   • Expectations

IV. Importance of delegation/personal responsibility in group process
   • Provides opportunities for individual and group growth
   • Develops a sense of shared responsibility and "ownership," i.e. a sense of community among group members.
V. Key elements for effective delegation:

• Trust

• Respect

• Support

• Resources

• Approachability

• Follow-through

• Adaptation

• Evaluation