

Leaders are not exclusively those we elect to office, those we read about, or those we hear interviewed in the news. The leaders in each of our lives – individuals we respect, emulate, admire, and follow – might be unsung heroes who are invisible to others who do not know of their amazing talents and gifts.

In this interactive session, we will identify our heroes – those who speak to our hearts. We will identify the characteristics of these leaders and honor them. We will consider how to apply what these role models teach us. After all, someone just may be watching you and following your lead!

Let me introduce you to some heroes who speak to my heart.

- Bob is a coach. I watched when his team did not come in first place, or second place, or even third place in the league championship. He worked hard with his team, but, alas, the team, though it did its best, was not good enough. Though the winners were ecstatic as their fans cheered, I watched Bob, my hero. He rallied around his team. He said, “We lost the game. Yet we played fair. We did our best. Tomorrow we’ll do better. It will be a brand new day.”
- Dawn is a business owner. I watched her work like mad to win a contract. She assembled all the pieces and the proposal was solid. It demonstrated skillfully that her business could do the job, do it well, do it within budget, and do it within the allotted time. Yet, another firm won. How the winning CEO gloated at this fine coup! My hero? Dawn studied the winning proposal – the parts that were made public. She requested advice on what she could have done to win. She listened. She learned. She congratulated the winner.
- Sally weathered a serious storm. Her home was in shambles. Her treasures – photographs, mementos, favorite books, clothes, furnishings – were in shambles. Her family was in shock, tearful, sad, bereft of their valued possessions. Others offered the family their consolation, their friendship, their support. I watched Sally sift through the rubble, pick up the leg of a broken chair. I watched her comfort her family and express gratitude for their safety. Then I saw Sally and her family reach out to a crying child who could not find her puppy, to a grandfather who could not find his cane.

Did anyone come to your mind while I was introducing you to my heroes, whose lead I will follow? (Susan Boyle, Britain’s Got Talent)

“The true leader is essentially a hero - someone who does something outstanding.” (Source: Mitch McCrimmon, Ph.D. and copyright © Self Renewal Group 1996-2009. <http://www.leadersdirect.com/herolead.html>)

1-Now think about your heroes, the folks you admire, the leaders in your life. Who are they? Consider the various communities in your world: family, friends, colleagues at work, the best in your profession, members of organizations, social networks, support systems, safety nets, and others.

2-What do you admire about your heroes? What qualities, behaviors, or characteristics make them leaders who speak to your hearts?

3-Can you think of one “signature” act, word, or gesture that captures the essence of these heroes and how they make you feel?

4-How can you demonstrate to your heroes, the leaders in your life, their impact on your life? After all, someone is likely looking to you to lead. Whether you know it or all, you are likely a hero!

Leaders Who Speak to Your Heart, Toastmasters District 65 Spring Conference, April 18, 2009

1. Who are the leaders that speak to your heart?	2. What characteristics in these leaders do you admire?	3. What captures the essence of these leaders?	4. How can you show the impact of these leaders on you?

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Ah-ha's

- The leaders that speak to your heart have qualities that are already in your heart that you can further develop.
- The qualities of the leaders who speak to your heart may vary, based on your expectations. What you expect from a friend and an advisor (medical, legal, spiritual) may differ.
- Yet, there may be common characteristics of the leaders who speak to your heart, regardless of your relationship to them.
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Top 10 Leadership Characteristics (from Google.com search of Leadership + Top 10)

	<p>Kevin Grauman, co-founder and CEO of Outsource Group in Walnut Creek, CA http://www.bizjournals.com/eastbay/stories/2005/05/09/focus3.html</p>	<p>David Hakala, scrivener (a professional or public copyist or writer, a scribe) http://www.hrworld.com/features/top-10-leadership-qualities-031908/</p>	<p>Martin Haworth, author of Super Successful Manager! http://ezinearticles.com/?Leadership-Styles---The-Ten-Top-Qualities-the-Best-Leaders-Show&id=32060</p>	<p>Bill Thomas, CEO/Managing Principal, Mustard Seed Investments Inc. http://www.leadership-toolkit.com/</p>
1	<p>Visionary. It is critical that there be an ability to define, communicate and inspire a practical, relevant and easily digestible vision, and to update and adapt it as circumstances change. Leaders must be able to think about the future and how they will propel, guide and adapt...in the face of uncertainty and unfamiliarity.</p>	<p>A leader with vision has a clear, vivid picture of where to go, as well as a firm grasp on what success looks like and how to achieve it. But it's not enough to have a vision; leaders must also share it and act upon it...A leader must be able to communicate his or her vision in terms that cause followers to buy into it. He or she must communicate clearly and passionately, as passion is contagious.</p>	<p>Visionary. Top leaders have a very clear understanding of where the organization is going and a clear strategy for getting there.</p>	<p>Questioning and challenging</p>
2	<p>Communicative. Succinct, consistent and optimistic communication to all levels within a company, regardless of the nature of the messages, is a fundamental attribute of all good leadership. Vital, too, is the encouragement of constructive feedback and disagreement. Active listening (not merely hearing) and being both readily available and accessible are essential.</p>	<p>Integrity is the integration of outward actions and inner values. A person of integrity is the same on the outside and on the inside. Such an individual can be trusted because he or she never veers from inner values, even when it might be expeditious to do so...Honest dealings, predictable reactions, well-controlled emotions, and an absence of tantrums and harsh outbursts are all signs of integrity. A leader who is centered in integrity will be more approachable by followers.</p>	<p>Communicate Really Well. Great leaders ensure that their message gets across to all in the organization - clearly.</p>	<p>Visioning and imagining</p>

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3	<p>Delivers on promises. Nothing erodes confidence faster than a series of broken promises. Since we participate in a “show me” world, the ability to consistently “walk the talk” and to deliver upon commitments are vital in a true leader.</p>	<p>Dedication means spending whatever time or energy is necessary to accomplish the task at hand. A leader inspires dedication by example, doing whatever it takes to complete the next step toward the vision. By setting an excellent example, leaders can show followers that there are no nine-to-five jobs on the team, only opportunities to achieve something great.</p>	<p>People people. Having a love for people helps these top performing leaders build relationships and develop wonderful team spirit.</p>	<p>Creating and crafting</p>
4	<p>Responsible. There is wariness for finger-pointing and for assignment of blame. Effective leaders take responsibility for decisions they have made or participated in, regardless of whether the outcomes are successful.</p>	<p>Magnanimity means giving credit where it is due. A magnanimous leader ensures that credit for successes is spread as widely as possible... Conversely, a good leader takes personal responsibility for failures. This sort of reverse magnanimity helps other people feel good about themselves and draws the team closer together. To spread the fame and take the blame is a hallmark of effective leadership.</p>	<p>Let Go of the Doing. Great leaders do just that - lead. They let their people get on with the doing - and encourage them.</p>	<p>Innovating and adapting</p>
5	<p>Humble. Followers disdain arrogance and brashness, since they are often associated with self-serving egotism. In contrast, too, conventional wisdom reveres modesty, humility and reserve.</p>	<p>Leaders with humility recognize that they are no better or worse than other members of the team. A humble leader is not self-effacing but rather tries to elevate everyone. Leaders with humility also understand that their status does not make them a god.</p>	<p>Understand Their Business. Not only are they visionary and strategically sound, but the “top dog” leaders truly understand their business, inside and out, good and bad, and firmly move it on - they make the difference.</p>	<p>Strategic thinking and perceiving</p>

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6	<p>Trustworthy. Trusted leaders select the people to work for them because they are intelligent, perceptive and empowered. In turn, followers oftentimes follow without having to know the entire story or picture. Their buy-in is for their perceived long-term, not short-term, gains. They tend to inspire others to share their burden (and those of the business that they are supporting) in tough times.</p>	<p>Openness means being able to listen to new ideas, even if they do not conform to the usual way of thinking. Good leaders are able to suspend judgment while listening to others' ideas, as well as accept new ways of doing things that someone else thought of. Openness builds mutual respect and trust between leaders and followers, and it also keeps the team well supplied with new ideas that can further its vision.</p>	<p>Models. They lead from the front and have the values of the organization and their people. They “do what it says on the tin.”</p>	<p>Communicating and listening</p>
7	<p>Capable. Leaders continually demonstrate competence, impressive aptitude, shrewd thinking, resourcefulness and apparently limitless capacity. They delegate with conviction. Leaders are passionate about teaching and mentoring, not training, their followers. And in each successful mentoring relationship there is an expectation for mutual learning - the apprentice from the leader and visa versa. Most importantly, a successful mentoring methodology assists in problem solving, not by becoming the solution provider, but by coaching independence of thought.</p>	<p>Creativity is the ability to think differently, to get outside of the box that constrains solutions. Creativity gives leaders the ability to see things that others have not seen and thus lead followers in new directions. The most important question that a leader can ask is, “What if...?”</p>	<p>Build Rapport Quickly. Excellent leaders have a way of building rapport instantly, through what they say, how they look and especially how well they listen and value the other person.</p>	<p>Coordinating and organizing</p>

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8	<p>Decisive. Making timely decisions, which are intelligent and unwavering, means that in some instances, the outcome is failure. This is acceptable - almost expected - by followers. More important than the outcome is the decision making. Effective leaders, by virtue of having made these leaps (successfully, or not), become better skilled at ensuring successful outcomes, thereby instilling ongoing confidence.</p>	<p>Fairness means dealing with others consistently and justly. A leader must check all the facts and hear everyone out before passing judgment. He or she must avoid leaping to conclusions based on incomplete evidence. When people feel they that are being treated fairly, they reward a leader with loyalty and dedication.</p>	<p>Charisma. As well as an ability to create rapport, they communicate well...they have a personal style which oozes that extra something - they have great charisma!</p>	<p>Enabling and empowering</p>
9	<p>Authentic. Principled by both high ethics and unwavering integrity, leaders regularly demonstrate a high correlation between their core behaviors, beliefs and principles and those that they expect to be present in their followers. Consequently, leadership embodies the persona of the leader, and it manifests regularly, consistently and unwaveringly, without hidden agendas or questionable intent.</p>	<p>Assertiveness is not the same as aggressiveness. Rather, it is the ability to clearly state what one expects so that there will be no misunderstandings. A leader must be assertive to get the desired results... It seems that being underassertive or overassertive may be the most common weakness among aspiring leaders.</p>	<p>Very Determined. Whilst having all those fabulous people skills, truly great leaders go that extra mile - they are determined to follow-through to achieve their goals and vision. They are totally ruthless - and in a people-friendly way.</p>	<p>Networking and orchestrating</p>
10	<p>Genuine and respectful. Leaders naturally garnish respect primarily for who they are, rather than for what they know. They are evenhanded in their dealings with others and relate to and validate them regardless of domain, tenure, seniority or context.</p>	<p>Sense of humor is vital to relieve tension and boredom, as well as to defuse hostility. Effective leaders know how to use humor to energize followers...and foster good camaraderie.</p>	<p>Passionate. Great leaders bring an immense energy to the task in hand... This one element distinguishes them most.</p>	<p>Learning and educating</p>