

# The Core Characteristics of Effective Leadership: Eleven Concepts Every School Leader (High School or College) Ought to Know

## General Thoughts About Leadership

1. It is to your distinct advantage to be a leader, **if you can balance leadership with your academic responsibilities.**
  - A. Having leadership positions makes you more marketable. Three qualities companies look for in **college** grads:
    1. Proven expertise in your degree field i.e. Grade Point Average.
    2. Work experience in your degree field
    3. Proven Social skills as determined by: an interview + **leadership positions**
  - B. Leading is tough, but it makes you a more effective person. "That which does not destroy me makes me stronger" - Nietzsche
2. Note 3 routes to leadership:
  - A. Elected
  - B. Appointed/selected/chosen
  - C. Self-selected (You start a new club/organization & serve as it's first leader.)
3. The dimensions of leadership philosophy: "Why am I choosing to be a Leader?" Egoism (I do it for me.) vs Altruism (I do it to help others.); Duty (**I have** to do it.) vs Passion (**I want** to do it.). Most leaders are somewhere in between on both scales.
4. Being a leader makes your life more complex: be prepared. "If you can't take the heat, stay out of the boiler room." To control complexity, have a **daily schedule** and a **daily tasks list**. **PRIORITIZE** the Tasks List based on **URGENCY** (urgent/not-urgent) and **IMPORTANCE** (important/not-important)
5. Being a leader is easier if you're an "E" (Myers-Briggs Personality Type) & especially if you're an ENTJ or ESTJ. But "I"s & ANY TYPE can lead! It just takes more emotional energy. Go to the following website to determine your MBPT:

[www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win//Jtypes2.asp](http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win//Jtypes2.asp)

(On this site, the MBPT test is called the "Jung Typology test.")

6. Two concepts are often associated with better (and often "Great") Leadership:

**Vision:** an idea which a leader is capable of powerfully advocating. i.e. JFK: go to the moon; MLK: Greater racial harmony & justice: "I have a dream." But beware - vision can be **negative** (Hitler: Lebensraum). Also, vision can be "low-key": a clear sense of direction or a few specific goals/objectives. For vision to be effective, it must be accompanied by the ability to **persuade**. (Woodrow Wilson failed to persuade with his vision of the League of Nations.) The ability to persuade stems from a) bonding with constituents; b) good public speaking and articulateness & c) good logic.

**Charisma:** a unique combination of personal characteristics, which usually includes (but is not limited to): charm, high self esteem, good looks, intelligence, high self confidence; person is articulate and a very good public speaker. Constituents are usually more likely to follow a leader with charisma.

**Contrary to popular opinion**, excellent leadership is possible without **either** of these - ESPECIALLY if a leader has mastered the “11 Concepts That Every College Leader Ought to Know”. However, “Great” leaders usually have both **vision** and **charisma**.

## **Eleven CORE leadership concepts**

Let's look at 11 CORE leadership concepts that apply to College & High School. Other fields, like Business & Politics, have additional/different concepts. **REMEMBER:** With effort, all **the characteristics of leadership** can be acquired.

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- 1. Always remember WHY** you've been elected to lead: **To help your group decide a) what they want to do, then b) how to do it.** (When “appointed” to a position of leadership, it may be because of your knowledge, talents or vision; you may or may not be called on to help a group decide what to do & how to do it. When you “self-select” to a position of leadership, it's usually because you have a vision & subsequently garner the support of others to help you carry it out.) This first concept requires you to be a facilitator and to understand the difference between a **dream** and a **goal** (GOALS are 1. quantifiable 2. within a time frame and 3. have SPECIFIC STEPS for being achieved). **Note:** Groups that are afraid of failure **shun** goals.
  
- 2. Master the “7 principles” of bonding** to your constituents (See “References”, below). Why? If you bond with your constituents, they'll like you (& elect you in the first place); if they like you, you've increased the probability they'll follow your leadership. The principles are:
  1. Be genuinely interested in other people
  2. Smile (Says “I'm approachable; it's OK to interact with me.”)
  3. Know how to remember other peoples' names (Repeat for # of seconds = your age in years)
  4. Constantly use appropriate self disclosure (especially in 5, 6, & 7 below)
  5. Be a good listener (Eye contact, interjection, non-verbal response, question/comment based on what was just said + related self disclosure) Use **questions** to keep conversation lively.
  6. Know how to talk in terms of the other person's interests. Use **questions** to find those interests.
  7. Affirmation: know how to use praise sincerely (Is easier with high self esteem)**References for Concept #2**

“How to Win Friends & Influence People” by Dale Carnegie; Part Two: “Six ways to make people like you”. (Principles **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7**)

“When I Say No, I Feel Guilty” by Manuel Smith; Part five: “Assertive Social Conversation and Communication” (Self disclosure). (Principle **4**) **For more details, look at "The Seven Principles That Cause People to Like Each Other" found elsewhere in this website.**
  
- 3. Know** how to be a high task - high maintenance leader. (**Task Behaviors** = get the job done; **Maintenance Behaviors** = insure that the individuals “feel good” about being part of the group effort.) (Take the Task-Maintenance Measurement found at the end of these notes on Leadership.)
  
- 4. Constantly be aware** of the **power of delegation**.
  
- 5. Know** when it's appropriate to use each of **the 6 modes of “the decision-making continuum”**, (which represents a trade-off between “Execution time” and “Support from the group”):

DECISION BY:

  - a. authority - the Leader (President/Chairman) decides. (takes least time, has least group support)
  - b. expert decides - a group member who understands the topic being decided
  - c. authority decides, after discussion with officers/cabinet

- d. minority (usually a committee)
- e. majority (A 51% vote).
- f. consensus - everyone agrees (takes most time, has most group support)

**6. Be a master of Stress Management**, a big part of which is **time management**. Know the 5 warning signs for “being stressed out”. You quit:

- a. getting enough sleep
- b. getting proper exercise
- c. eating well (getting proper nutrition)
- d. spending time with the people you care about.
- e. and you start abusing substances

“I burn the candle at both ends; it will not last the night.  
But ah my foes and ah my friends, it gives a lovely light.”

**7. Master public speaking. PRACTICE** every chance you get! Easier for “E”s. **Bold** = Most Important  
6 voice characteristics (verbal)                      6 visual characteristics (non-verbal); 12 delivery tools (“Spice” or “Theatrics”)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>volume</b></li> <li>- tone</li> <li>- <b>speed of delivery</b></li> <li>- <b>pauses</b></li> <li>- enunciation</li> <li>- <b>no verbal distractions</b> (‘er’ ...)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>eye contact</b></li> <li>- <b>attire/appearance</b></li> <li>- facial expression</li> <li>- <b>hand gestures</b></li> <li>- <b>body movement</b></li> <li>- <b>no non-verbal distractions</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stories</li> <li>- word choice</li> <li>- sentence structure</li> <li>- repetition</li> <li>- parallel structure</li> <li>- emotions</li> <li>- quotations/poetry</li> <li>- acting ( + props)</li> <li>- humor</li> <li>- cadence</li> <li>- self disclosure</li> <li>- <b>speak EXACTLY for allotted time</b></li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

**PLUS Powerful Opening and Memorable Closing**

**For more details, look at "The Characteristics of effective Public Speaking" found elsewhere in this website.**

**8. Constantly monitor the 4 indicators of organizational health:**

- a. membership (Is the group the right size?)
- b. finances (Is the group staying out of debt and has sufficient funds to achieve its goals?)
- c. support (Do the vast majority of the members show up for the group’s functions?)
- d. scholarship (applicable for **school** groups) (Is the group GPA acceptably high?)

**9. Master whatever rules** (like “Roberts Rules of Order”) your group has adopted for running its meetings.

**10. Know** the 3 steps for dealing with someone who has "dropped the ball":

- a. Appreciate his/her willingness to take on the task and empathize with the demands on his/her time.
- b. Describe how you perceive the task is not being achieved.
- c. Ask how you can help him/her accomplish the task. What can we do together? - Maybe even get SOMEONE ELSE to do it.

**11. Master INTEGRITY:** Do what you say and say what you do - **always!**

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## Task/Maintenance behaviors

## Task-Oriented Behavior

**Task behaviors** help the group to achieve its goals & objectives within a time frame.

1. **Initiating.** Proposing tasks or goals, defining a group problem, suggesting a procedure or idea for solving a problem, etc.
2. **Seeking information or opinions.** Requesting facts, seeking relevant information about group concern. Asking for expressions of feeling, requesting a statement or estimate, soliciting expression of value, seeking suggestions and ideas, etc.
3. **Giving information or opinion.** Offering facts, providing relevant information about group concern. Stating a belief about a matter before the group, giving suggestions and ideas, etc.
4. **Clarifying and elaborating.** Interpreting ideas or suggestions: clearing up confusions; defining terms; suggesting alternatives and issues before the group, etc.
5. **Summarizing.** Pulling together related ideas: restating suggestions after the group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject, etc.
6. **Consensus testing.** Asking the group if it is nearing a decision; sending up a trial balloon to test a possible conclusion, etc.
7. **Monitoring the time** so the group achieves its objectives by the deadline.

## Maintenance-Oriented Behavior

**Maintenance behaviors** are necessary for maintaining good working order, having a good climate for task work, and developing good relationships that permit maximum use of member resources:

1. **Harmonizing.** Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension; getting members to explore differences, etc.
2. **Gate Keeping.** Helping to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures that permit sharing remarks, etc.
3. **Encouraging.** Being friendly, warm, and responsive to others; indicating by facial expression or remark the acceptance of others; contributions, praising the progress of the group, praising individual effort/contributions, etc.
4. **Compromising.** Offering a compromise in a conflict involving own ideas or status, admitting error; modifying position for interest of group cohesion or growth, etc.
5. **Standard setting and testing.** Testing whether the group is satisfied with its procedures or suggesting new procedures; pointing out explicit or implicit norms that have been set and are available for testing, etc.
6. **Affirming.** Letting a group member know when s/he has done a task well.
7. **Making the group effort enjoyable.** Providing refreshments; using humor to lighten the mood; verbalizing pride in the group when it's goals are met.

Sociologists have specifically identified ten types of **maintenance actions**: encourager of participation; harmonizer and compromiser; tension reliever; communication helper; evaluator of emotional climate; process observer; affirmer (complimenting for a job well done); active listener; trust builder; and interpersonal problem solver.

The most identifiable and popular of the ten types are 1) the **tension reliever** or the person who relieves the tension within the group by telling jokes and stories, suggesting breaks or fun activities( as opposed to task activities); and 2) the **affirmer**.

Objective: To determine the degree that a person uses tasks and maintenance behaviors.

Instructions:

1. Have the learners complete the 18 items in the Questionnaire section below. Nine items are Task behaviors; 9 are Maintenance behaviors.
2. Next, have them transfer their answers for each numbered item to the two respective columns provided in the scoring section. Total the score in each column. For example, in the first column (Maintenance), if the learner answered 5, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4, 3 then his or her final score is = 33.
3. The total score for the first column (Maintenance) is plotted on vertical axis, while the total score for the second column (Task) is plotted on a horizontal axis extending to the right of the vertical axis. (The scale on both axes goes to 45.) Finally, have the learners plot the point determined by their 2 scores to see which of the 4 quadrants of the graph they are in. (Divide the graph into 4 quadrants with lines from 22.5 on both axes.)

High T / Low M = Authoritarian (Drill Sergeant)  
Low T / Low M = Impoverished (Total Vegetable)  
High T / High M = Team Leader (George Washington)  
Low T / High M = Dr. Feelgood

Questionnaire

Below is a list of statements about leadership behavior. Read each one carefully, then, using the following scale, decide the extent to which it actually applies to you. For best results, answer as truthfully as possible.

never		sometimes		always	
0	1	2	3	4	5

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I encourage my team to participate when it comes decision making time and I try to implement their ideas and suggestions.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Nothing is more important than accomplishing a goal or task.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I closely monitor the schedule to ensure a task or project will be completed in time.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy coaching people on new tasks and procedures.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The more challenging a task is, the more I enjoy it.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I encourage my team members to be creative about their job & assignments.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ When seeing a complex task through to completion, I ensure that every detail is accounted for.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I find it easy to carry out several complicated tasks at the same time.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy reading articles, books, and journals about training, leadership, and psychology; and then putting what I have read into action.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ When correcting mistakes, I do not worry about jeopardizing relationships.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I manage my time very efficiently.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy explaining the intricacies and details of a complex task or project to my team members.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Breaking large projects into small manageable tasks is second nature to me.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Nothing is more important than building a great team.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy analyzing problems.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ I honor other people's boundaries.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Counseling my team members to improve their performance or behavior is second nature to me.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy reading articles, books, and trade journals about my profession; and then implementing the new procedures I have learned.

Scoring Section

After completing the Questionnaire, transfer your answers to the spaces below:

**Maintenance statements:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ (Maximum possible score = 45)

**Task statements:**

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ (Maximum possible score = 45)