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Become a Leader That People Want to Follow

Regardless of whether you believe leaders are born, and not made, or you believe true leaders develop through experience, there is always room for improvement in one's leadership skills.

True leaders understand that leadership of people is a transformation process that will benefit both you and your team. As the old military saying goes, "If you take care of your troops, they will take care of you."

Here are some tips on how to enhance your management abilities and become a better leader:

Communicate better by keeping your mouth shut

Effective leaders know when to be quiet and listen. After all, it is only after employees have a chance to say what they need to say that they become open to anything that you may have to offer.

Become more involved with your team

Eat lunch with your team, visit with them and ask about their interests or hobbies, and show genuine interest in the information they want to share with you.

Increase your tolerance for opinions and views that are different from yours

While you may not agree with everything a person says, you need to respect his or her right to an opinion.

Write hand-written notes

Take the time to hand-write a note (pen and paper, not e-mail) of recognition to someone for a job well done. While hand-written notes are rarely used in today's fast-passed world of technology, they are still one of the most effective ways to boost morale.

Recognize the value of life-long learning

Great leaders recognize that changing times demand increasing skills and knowledge, and they seek out the opportunity to learn - not only through continuing education, but also with the help of mentors.

Think of others' needs first.

Leaders should always be thinking about their team, including employees, vendors, customers, and their family.

Become more flexible

Just because you have never tried doing something a different way doesn't mean that you shouldn't.

Learn from your mistakes

Every leader makes mistakes. The key is to learn from your mistakes and use them as a guide for similar situations in the future.

Laugh and enjoy yourself

While leaders obviously hold a very important position, they also need to laugh and enjoy the lighter side of life.