



ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY



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Do people learn the art of becoming a leader or are they born with it?

Introduction:

Leadership and many other defining traits of a leader have been debated for decades. Leaders born with the art of leadership or they learn these characteristics over time is still a debatable topic because One of the most often-asked questions about leadership is that **"Leaders are born or made?"** First, we have to define that what is leadership? Leadership is a skill that influences the behavior of people to work eagerly towards accomplishing a few destinations in their lives. It is the quality of a person that motivates people for achieving their collective as well as individual goals. There are different definitions of leadership because in today's environment different types of leadership exist. Therefore, we cannot conclude that which one is the standard definition of leadership. When we think about great leaders, a question that arouses in our mind is that were they born with these qualities of leadership or they learned them with time through their experience? However, different theories provide different views about this debatable question that leaders are born or made?

According to John F Kennedy:

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

In the 1840s a popular theory "the Great Man" was represented by Thomas Carlyle which recommended that leadership skills are natural and great leaders have these built-in qualities to lead a group of people for the achievement of a common goal (**Waldman 2009**). These people have built-in qualities and abilities like kindness, morality, and honesty which make them great leaders. Such skills and qualities help an individual to maintain good relations with followers. Therefore, to become a great leader, one must meet such qualities. According to my point of view, a leader is a person who has built-in qualities for leadership and guides other people through these qualities. Sometimes, a person is considered to be a formal leader when he/she is given by the ownership of administrative rank in any organization and sometimes a person may be considered as an informal leader due to his/her guiding principles provided to a group of people not essentially that person who has given the authority of decision making. For a case in real life, it is

exceptionally troublesome to require a bunch of individuals and persuade them to work in conjunction for the same goal. For such things, some unique principles and values are required. Most of the important principles that a leader follows are integrity because without complete trust people don't follow a leader. To become a great leader, a person needs to have a positive approach. These all are built-in qualities of a person, which make them a great leader.

Historically there are different examples of the people who naturally came to the leadership and there were also many people who learned and developed their leadership skills through experience and training. To answer the question that "Leaders are born or made?" we have to understand leadership in two different ways. Firstly, through the concept of (nurture) which is environmental influences, and secondly, through the concept of (nature) which is a genetic component. Many incredible leaders have ceaselessly created and influenced human lives enormously. For example, the foremost outstanding ones incorporate Winston Churchill who advanced popular government, Martin Luther King, who driven the battle for racial correspondence, and Charles Schwab, who have gotten to be exceptionally effective business visionaries. These all are great leaders of their time. Some of them were influenced by the environment and some possessed built-in qualities. As far as my position in this discussion is concerned is that **"Leaders are born, not made."**

Leaders are born, not made:

Different scenarios support the statement that "Leaders are born, not made." For example, if there is a student in a class who is always ready to take responsibilities like monitoring the class and assuming the commands will be recognized as a person having leadership skills because he/she has this built-in potential to manage different situations with courage and confidence. Such leaders are recognized at a very young age, which provides a piece of clear evidence that leaders are born with leadership qualities (**Robert 2008**). This belief is also supported by different theories.

Great Man theory indicates that people have some inborn qualities and traits like (self-confidence, communication skills, courage, and intelligence, etc) that help them to become great leaders (**Waldman 2009**). Courage is an inborn quality. If a person wants to learn leadership skills, first he/she should have the courage to take up the position of leadership and should be able to come out and lead other people for a common objective. Intelligence is also an important built-in quality of a leader. For example, if a person is not intelligent, then how he/she can learn intelligence

through training? Without this quality would he/she be able of learning leadership skills? So, this shows that leadership qualities are God-gifted. It cannot be developed through training or learning. In many people, some God-gifted skills help them a lot to become great leaders such as Sir Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher who were the Great British Prime Ministers. Both of these leaders did not learn these leadership skills from any school (**Seltzer & Bernard 2008**). This shows that they were born as leaders with inborn managerial skills.

Colin Powel presented an argument that "Leaders are made". His argument is valid to an extend because according to him, leadership is a skill that can be learned through different errors, experiences, and trials, but according to my point of view, one should have zeal, patience, and courage to face these troubles and trials (**Chen & Bliese 2002**). One should be able to face the followers through such attributes. These qualities are built-in which also provides a piece of evidence to support the claim that leaders are born with some traits in them. But there is a great difference between "mastering a skill" and "learning a skill". This shows that if a person has an inborn singing quality, then he/she can naturally excel in that areas (fields of music). While on the other hand the person, who doesn't have any inborn singing quality would be like a fish out of water and would require a lot of hard work and struggle to get to the same point.

These examples show that the "Great Man" theory is not the only theory that supports the claim that leaders are born. There is also a Trait theory that is similar to the Great Man theory. Both theories explain that a leader is born with leadership qualities. They show that there are built-in traits that cannot be easily instilled into someone by training or learning. These theories also define relationships of trust and integrity between the leaders and their followers that how leaders can truly guide and encourage their followers towards the achievement of their common objective.

There is also a theory named "Contingency Theory". This theory helps us to answer the question that what is the quality of our leadership? It shows that the quality of our leadership depends upon the environment in which we are leading and practicing our leadership (**Arvey, Rotundo, Johnson, Zhang & McGue 2006**). This is also an inborn trait of a leader which helps him/her to respond to the people of different environments. A leader who is adjustable to different environments will practice his/her good leadership skills without being the influence of any environment. He/she would perform his/her leadership regardless of whether his/her followers are responding or not. This is also an inborn trait and cannot be developed easily. These all theories

are supporting the statement that "Leaders are born, not made." This is the reason why I am also a supporter of the claim that "Leaders are born."

Leaders are made, not born:

Different psychologists have researched that leaders are mostly made. Many individuals oppose this idea with the contention that leaders are born. This has driven the recommendation that leaders are made. Although leadership is a skill that requires some built-in qualities like courage and confidence this skill needs to be polished with time. It is not possible to have all the required qualities inborn. While on the other hand, it is also not possible to develop all the qualities through learning. Some qualities can be improved like communication skills and managerial skills. In some cases, leadership becomes a difficult task to perform (**DalGLISH & Miller 2010; Dao 2008**). For example for a President or a Prime Minister, it becomes very difficult to lead a nation in which different people have different visions and thoughts. Similarly, leading a military unit or an organization is also a difficult task but developing these traits through training and experience helps a lot to overcome such difficulties.

Many behavioral theories indicate that a person can learn leadership skills through the process of learning, observation, experience, and teaching. Learning leadership skills is a lifetime activity. Different organizations believe in the assumption that through training leaders are made, invest a lot of sources and money to help their workers in learning leadership skills. Basic leadership skills can be learned by anyone, but a lot of leadership cannot be taught by someone. To be a master of skill is different from being a learner of that skill. For example, a singer is born with a skill of singing but he/she can further improve his/her skill through practice and by taking music classes. Similarly, a person can also improve leadership skills through training sessions. Nelson Mandela (first black president of South Africa) was a shepherd in a small village. His influence of the environment at that time and his inborn capabilities exhibited leadership skills in him. So, we can say that leadership skills are just like an ocean of capabilities, which shows that there is no end to learning these skills. Although one learns leadership skills through training, it is not enough until one has his/her built-in traits. First, one should have courage and zeal for learning these traits. Then one should become a great leader because these training and learning sessions are just a tool for the improvement of built-in qualities. These skills continue to polish with the passage of time and through experience.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we conclude that the most important aspects for a leader are inborn qualities as compare to learned leadership skills. If we compare inborn leadership and learned leadership, it is obvious that inborn qualities are more important than learned skills. Leaders are born with leadership qualities. To become a good leader one should bear with all these basic qualities required for leadership like courage, intelligence, self-confidence, and morality. Then these qualities can be improved through learning and experiences. In all the above discussion, we have not said that training is not important for leadership but it is also clear that training or learning must be used as a tool to polish these qualities. These are the reasons why I believe that "Leaders are not made, they are born." I believe that only a small amount of leadership can be taught through training sessions. Leaders that have built-in leadership qualities continue to improve their skills by observing the other leader's style of leading and communication. They make their skills stronger through experiences. They idealize their mentors and different role models for the development of their skills. Therefore, we can say that built-in traits are necessary for becoming a great leader. They can be improved but cannot be created.

References:

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