

Leadership

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Leadership is important in all aspects of life. Leadership is important in family, business, government, religion and any other category the involves a group of people. A good leader works for the team and not themselves. They provide structure and direction for the people they lead. They can look ahead and see potential risks as well as opportunities that will help meet their goal. Through communication that provide a shared vision with the team so everyone knows what the goals are and how they will be met. They keep track of all aspects of the project and help to keep the team on schedule.

Leaders are good motivators. They empower their team by providing knowledge, help, and constructive criticism when needed. They delegate tasks to the team and trust the team to handle these responsibilities. A good leader builds their team members up, making them capable of leadership in the future.

Good leaders care about their team. They check in on their team members and make sure everyone has all the tools they need for the project. They care about the welfare of each team member. They have good team building skills that can really help bring everyone together. When the project is finished a leader strives for future improvement. They listen to the team and discuss what could have worked better.

The first leader I will discuss will be from my personal life. She was a former manager of mine. Her name is Jennifer – I will exclude her last name for privacy purposes – and she was one of the best managers I have ever had. As we were in the restaurant industry, we didn't have the same type of goals as another team might have. We had a consistent goal making high sales and providing an excellent experience to the customer. We could never truly meet our goal. Our best metric for goal-tracking was measuring our current success against how successful we were a year ago. As servers we had no way of knowing how we compared, especially if we did not work there last year. Jennifer always went out of her way to tell us if we were doing a good job. She would never dampen our spirits by telling us if we did worse than last year but she would tell us when we beat our sales from last year. She always made a big deal about it to try and hype us up and make us feel accomplished. She would also often compare us to our coworkers, though only individually. When I got the highest sales of the night, she would let me know in the office as I checked out.

Whenever someone had an issue – getting an order wrong, sending out cold food, long wait times, etc. – Jennifer was always quick to fix the problem. Other managers might discipline you, and some restaurants made you pay for your mistakes. Jennifer was always supportive. She would fix the issue and, if applicable, take the moment to teach you a better method – sometimes its no one's fault or the mistake was so minor it didn't require instruction to fix.

Some managers would expect you to go above and beyond – coming in on your days off, coming in early, staying late, etc. – just because they asked. Jennifer always offered incentives. Did you come in early? You get a free meal off of the lunch menu. Did you come in on a day off? You get a free steak dinner. If we were slow, managers expected us to clean, because they don't pay us \$2.15 an hour to stand around. Jennifer would not only offer incentives – gift cards, food, or a pass to not roll silverware (my personal favorite) – but she would make it a game. We

played the dirtiest towel where the person who had the dirtiest or greatest number of dirty towels won the prize.

Jennifer was very good at recognizing skill and potential. I had only been working there for two months when she told me I was going to start taking big parties by myself and also start training new people. Technically, I required special training to do both of those things and corporate held those sessions only once or twice a year, but Jennifer recognized my skill and work-ethic. She didn't want to waste the opportunity to have someone live up to their full potential. There were similar cases with other employees where she recognized their hard work, people skills, and commitment to the job, and moved them up to bartending within two months of starting. The people of my example had no prior bar experience either, but they were great with people and often came in on their days off when extra help was needed. These people would later go on to become managers themselves. A good leader grooms others for leadership as well.

Overall, Jennifer was a fantastic leader. She was the best boss I've ever worked for, and that includes my family. She delegated work well, provided incentive to employees and groomed others to lead. Jennifer moved on to another store in the company but everyone still misses her. She was such a good leader that some employees followed her when she left.

I wanted the next leader in my paper to be a historical figure. I played with the idea of a president for a while. I couldn't decide between John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, or Barack Obama. Finally, I decided on Martin Luther King, Jr. I shouldn't even have to explain why he's inspirational and it would be hard to find anyone who disagrees. As you probably know, Martin Luther King, Jr. was a civil rights activist, and likely the most important figure in the civil rights movement. He led half the nation in a peaceful protest for civil rights and he more or less succeeded. Streets in almost every city have been renamed in his honor [2]!

Martin Luther King, Jr. was made aware of racial inequality when he was pursuing his doctorate in Systematic Theology [1]. This was the beginning of his role as a civil rights leader. As a minister, he was close to God and chose to pursue a path of peace. He was also inspired by another great leader Mahatma Gandhi to continue his peaceful activism [1]. In 1955, he became the most visible leader of the civil rights movement [2]. He is still the most widely recognized name in civil rights. He continued to inspire the civil rights movement even after his assassination in 1968 [2].

King led many people in many different protests. He led protests for the right to vote, segregation, and labor rights among many other things [2]. In 1955 he led the Montgomery bus boycott [2] which was a response to segregation on the transit system and was accidentally started by Rosa Parks when she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. In 1957, he helped form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) [1] and became its first president [2].

King helped organize the March on Washington where he would deliver his famously inspirational "I have a dream" speech [2]. In his speech he shared his hopes for a world or equality. King's efforts culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, desegregating public areas [1].

King was a leader to most of the nation. He helped and gave voice to the disenfranchised and those who supported them. He led numerous protests and through all of it, never gave up his peaceful ways. He changed the lives of everyone in the country and his legacy lives on to this day.

As this paper is about leadership in general and does not specifically require that I remain in the realm of reality, I decided that the last leader I will write about will be Ned Stark from *A Song of Ice and Fire* better-known as the TV show, *Game of Thrones*. Ned Stark was the leader of House Stark, an ancient lineage with the largest hold in the fictitious country of Westeros. He was a devoted father and raised all of his children to be great leaders – besides perhaps his youngest son who was killed before having a chance to lead.

When he believed his sister was abducted, he led a revolution with his best friend, Robert Baratheon, to overthrow the current rulers of the land in order to free his sister from the prince. The revolution was successful and his best friend was crowned king after defeating the prince in combat.

After the prince's death, Ned managed to find his sister. He learned that she had not actually been abducted but ran away with the prince. She had just given birth to a child of that union. In order to protect the child, who would be killed as the legitimate heir to the throne, Ned proclaimed the child was his own. This caused problems with his wife as she believed Ned cheated on her during the war to have this child. Ned did what was best for the child like a true leader would.

Later in life, Ned was asked to be the Hand of the King. He did not wish to leave his home or his family, but he accepted the role. Once again, he did what was best for others and not himself. As the king occupied himself with revelry and debauchery, Ned led the kingdom for him. Ned was looked out for all aspects of the kingdom. He helped settle debts and even put a stop to an assassination plot. Ned did many great things all at great cost to himself. Ultimately, he was executed for supposed "treason," although he was actually doing what was right and lawful and attempting to expose powerful people's misdeeds.

Reference List:

1. 10 Of The Most Inspiring Leaders Of All Time: Remarkable Stories Of Iconic Trail Blazers Who Went From Adversity To Extraordinary & Redefined Leadership. *Inspiring Leadership Now*. 2 April 2020. [Online] Available from: <https://www.inspiringleadershipnow.com/most-inspiring-leaders-redefine-leadership/> [Accessed 22 April 2021]
2. Martin Luther King Jr. *Wikipedia*. [online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr [Accessed 22 April 2021].