

# Leadership

A leader is someone who influences others. We all have an image of a leader. It can be described by such words as intelligent, courageous, persuasive, skillful, and powerful. Some people think of the Boy Scout qualities of leadership (trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent).

Most people have some ideas about leaders that can be called **myths**.

Examples of these myths include:

1. Some people are born leaders,
2. Leaders defeat enemies,
3. Leadership is a characteristic, some have it and some do not,
4. Leadership is no more than getting others to do what you want them to do,
5. Leadership always involves action.

These are myths because

1. Leadership is learned,
2. Leaders help others accomplish group goals which need not involve an enemy,
3. Anyone can be a leader at any time if that person helps the group meet its goals,
4. Manipulative leaders eventually arouse opposition
5. Sometimes leadership involves not taking action.

## Leadership Styles

Each person has a leadership style they feel comfortable with. You must realize is that there are different styles of leadership that are required for different situations. Sometimes you may have to switch to a different style of leadership to get the job accomplished.

### **STYLE: *AUTOCRATIC***

#### Characteristics

- \* One person or a small group tells others what to do
- \* Limits discussion on ideas and new ways of doing things
- \* Group does not experience feeling of teamwork
- \* Individuals don't think...they just support the person leading (their beliefs/ values)

#### When Effective

- \* Time is limited
- \* Individuals lack skill/knowledge (one person may be older with more knowledge)
- \* Group does not know each other (shy, one person stops following, takes control)

#### When Ineffective

- \* Developing a strong sense of team is the goal
- \* Some degree of skill/knowledge is in members
- \* Group wants an element of spontaneity in their work
- \* When a group involves individuals who can think for themselves

## **STYLE: DEMOCRATIC**

### Characteristics

- \* Involves group members in planning and carrying out activities (everybody may work on specific projects but they are geared towards similar goal)
- \* Asks before tells i.e. "what do you think about this? Is this ok?"
- \* Fosters healthy debate over issues
- \* Promotes a sense of teamwork

### When Effective

- \* Time is available
- \* Group is motivated and/or sense of team exists
- \* Some degree of skill or knowledge among group
- \* Can still work with a leader who in this guides, recommends, advises

### When Ineffective

- \* Group is unmotivated
- \* Group lacks knowledge and skill to make decision
- \* High degree of conflict present among members
- \* Lack of direction

## **STYLE: LAISSEZ-FAIRE – A leadership style where there is no interference with people's actions**

### Characteristics

- \* Little or no direction or guidance to group/individuals
- \* Opinion is offered only when requested
- \* No one seems to be in charge
- \* Independent based

### When Effective

- \* High degree of skill and motivation
- \* Sense of team exists (work together → know each others strengths & weaknesses)
- \* Routine is familiar to group members – everyone knows what to do

### When Ineffective

- \* No sense of team or cooperation
- \* Low degree of skill/knowledge in the group members
- \* Group expects to be told what to do (looking for leader)