

Leadership Characteristics Discussion

Leadership Definitions:

Leadership is the ability or process to influence, lead or guide others so as to accomplish a goal or mission. Leadership also means having a vision of what is to be accomplished. Do you influence your parents? Your brothers or sister? Do you influence members of a team in your school? Do you influence others in your church? Scouts? JROTC? Sure you do! You lead others every day in so many ways. And most often it is NOT because you have the authority. You lead by your behavior and by setting the example for others. You persuade your friends to do something they had not thought possible. You even lead yourself. In fact, that is where leadership begins~~~WITHIN YOU!!

On a separate piece of paper, answer the questions and select some behaviors that help influence others. Please think about the leadership behaviors that you possess right now and the behaviors you need to improve to become a more effective leader.

#1

Jon is normally an average worker. He does not show much initiative. However, when he is in charge of a group, his team always completes the task and the finished product is outstanding.

When asked about his groups' results, his teammates proudly answered, "Jon makes it easy for us to complete our tasks. He helps us and makes suggestions when we need help, but he lets us do the work. If we have a problem, he always listens to our ideas.

Because he is always excited about what he is doing, we get excited too. He seems to know all he can about a task before we get started on it. While we are doing the task, he respects our views about how to complete it. He effectively uses the talents of everyone on the team, and he makes smart decisions. He is always there when we need him and somehow, he still finds the time to do his share of the project. His hard work motivates us toward developing our own work ethic.

He accepts responsibility for the outcome of our tasks, whether good or bad. None of us wants a project to be done poorly, but he does not blame others for any mistakes that he or the team may have made. After finishing one task, we are always glad to bring the next project under his direction."

Would you like to be a member of Jon's team? What are his desirable leadership characteristics? What are his undesirable characteristics?

#2

Maria knows exactly what her position in a large commercial business is all about. She gets excited whenever her boss assigns her a project because she knows that she can get it done. Sometimes, she even suggests projects to her boss.

Maria is highly motivated and has very structured work habits. She likes to map out a project in which everything is her decision. She then tells her team members how to

do each step of their tasks according to her direction. She watches everything that her team members do, and if they appear to be doing a task differently from her plan, she criticizes them.

Maria got upset once when a teammate was overheard speaking unprofessionally to a client. At first she was afraid to talk to that person about the incident and she did not know what to say to her peers who had also heard about it. Finally, after asking herself how she would like to be treated if she were the one involved, she called a team meeting.

At the meeting Maria informed everyone that all team members make mistakes, not only as a team, but also as individuals. She hoped that if they had any problems, they would turn to her and/or other team members for help. They agree.

Would you like to be a member of Maria's team? What are her desirable leadership characteristics? What are her undesirable characteristics?

Additionally:

These case studies illustrate the positive and negative application of leader behaviors. Do you possess any of them? Identify which behaviors you need to work on to become an effective leader? Why?