



By Dr. Randall Spence

Every organizational entity—the government, the educational system, the marketplace and the church—is desperate for good leadership. Erika Andersen, founding partner of the Proteus International consulting firm, and author of *Leading So People Will Follow* says that we long for good and trustworthy leaders in every part of our lives and our organizations often languish for the lack of them.

In this book, Andersen identifies six timeless leadership qualities that truly engage constituents, and gives readers insight into how we ourselves can develop those qualities to become a more effective leader.

## **Six Qualities of Leaders Others Will Follow:**

### **They Are Far-Sighted**

Effective leaders have a clear and compelling vision that speaks to their team. Great leaders communicate their vision in such a way that extinguishes fear and inspires hope and a sense of purpose. The key to this is that the leader must embody their vision in order to get buy-in. People must be able to see that the leader's vision is a part of their own personal compass for decision-making and action.

### **They Are Passionate**

For a leader, passion translates to commitment. Passion helps people understand expectations and also fosters a sense of security because there is no question that the leader will stay the course and see a vision through to its completion, no matter the obstacles encountered along the way.

### **Five Key Behaviors of a Passionate Leader:**

- They commit honestly: The commitments they make are done because they truly believe in them. Theirs is not a fake, superficial or self-serving motivation.
- They make a clear case without being dogmatic. The way to spot dogmatism is when a leader states their opinion as truth.
- They invite real dialogue about their passion. They are open to others' thoughts and to new information.
- They act in support of their passion.
- They remain committed despite adversity.

### **They Are Courageous**

We often think of courageous in physical terms like a soldier storming the enemy. For leaders, courage often means staying true to beliefs despite opposition or fears. Courage does not necessarily mean an absence of fear, but rather it means acting with integrity in the presence of fear.

### **Five Key Behaviors of a Courageous Leader**

- They are willing to make the necessary, tough choices.
- They put themselves at risk for the good of the enterprise.
- They do things that are personally difficult.
- They take full responsibility for their actions.
- They admit and apologize for mistakes.

### **They Are Wise**

Wisdom is the quality that balances the first three qualities of farsightedness, passion and courage. Wisdom is the ability to reflect and understand and to grow from that understanding. It is the result of learning from experience.

Wisdom in a leader gives people confidence that important decisions are being carefully made and that the welfare of others is being taken into consideration.

### **Five Key Behaviors of a Wise Leader:**

- They are deeply curious and they listen.
- They assess situations objectively.
- They reflect on and learn from their experiences. The wise leader takes note of the results of his or her actions.
- They are able to see patterns in the big picture and share their insights.
- They act based on what they believe to be morally right.

### **They Are Generous**

Great leaders exhibit a willingness to share their knowledge, give credit where it's due, put their faith in others, and most importantly, give people the freedom to act on their own.

The Five Key Behaviors of a Generous Leader:

- They assume that the people around them have good intentions.
- They share power and authority by appropriately preparing those to whom they delegate and support with ongoing feedback.
- They do not hoard information and knowledge.
- They freely give credit, praise and reward.
- They provide the resources for others to succeed.

## **They Are Trustworthy**

Of the six elements Andersen identifies, of leaders whom others will follow, trust is the most important. A leader can lack in another area but the bottom line is that people won't follow a leader whom they do not trust. To be trustworthy means that a leader tells the truth, keeps their commitments, and leads with integrity and skill.

The Five Key Behaviors of a Trustworthy Leader:

- They tell the truth as they understand it. They don't manipulate the facts to get the outcome they want, and they recognize that little lies are still lies.
- They do what they say they will do. While this may seem obvious, it is often not done.
- They keep confidences.
- They speak and act for the greater good.
- They are capable and get results.

Andersen concludes by sharing some guidance for making a practical and simple plan for ongoing development as leaders. She share three steps:

- **Assess where you are as a leader.** Evaluate which of the six behaviors are growth areas for you and which are areas of strength.
- **Play to your strengths.** Which area is your greatest strength? What are some ways you can best use this strength?
- **Work on the behaviors that need the most development.** Utilize others in your life who can provide support and assistance as you seek to grow in these areas.

As we each learn to play to our strengths and develop our weaknesses, we each can become a leader whom others will follow. If that is your desire and you want to know more, I encourage you to read this enlightening book.

***Leading So People Will Follow***  
By Erika Andersen  
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