



Why do people follow leaders? The answer to that question lies within each individual. Everyone follows a leader for his own purposes. Some want to learn what the leader has to teach. Some are inspired by the message/philosophy of the leader and seek to become part of the vision the leader hopes to achieve. Others seek status, power and/or other opportunities as they advance within the leader's group. Whereas, others might seek to fulfill a need to find themselves through spiritual, psychological or physical growth under the guidance of the leader. Whatever a follower's needs may be, the leader seems to have the necessary ingredient. There is an old Chinese saying: *"When the student is ready, the master will appear."* So, when the master appears, what are the guidelines that should be at the foundation of a healthy leader/follower relationship?

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❶ PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

This was emphasized earlier in the section outlining the normative Strategies for Change. It cannot be emphasized enough. You must be consistent in doing this. Never be above doing what it is that you ask your followers to do. Walk the talk.

❷ BE HONEST WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

Your followers are helping you to achieve your vision. They are following you because they believe in you and in your vision. They are investing in your ability to lead them, mentor them

and prepare them to eventually create their own path as a NORMATIVE Leader. Each follower has certain talents and abilities and they use them in varying capacities. As you organize your followers, you must try to match the talent with the responsibilities. Your followers will display various levels of competence when following through with their responsibility areas. They will make mistakes. That is to be expected. However, if you do not address why the mistake happened and how it can be prevented from happening in the future, your followers will not grow.

Many leaders, because they do not want to cause conflict or feel it is easier to fix the problem themselves, hurt their followers by not questioning. Honest feedback on mistakes made and/or performance problems allows the followers to see the reality of their actions through your eyes. It sometimes hurts to hear the truth, but your followers will appreciate your honesty.

You should also give an honest assessment of any circumstances that are pending that have an impact upon the group's ability to move forward in attaining the vision. Covering up the situation only makes it worse when it eventually comes to light. Your followers will feel a breach of trust with you and this will have a detrimental impact upon the future relationship you have with them. Be honest. Enlist their expertise in defining solutions to help to resolve the issue.

③ DON'T CROSS THE LINE

Professional relationships can sometimes turn into personal relationships, sexual relationships and other relationships that are collusive in nature. When this happens, you will lose your objectivity and effectiveness as a leader. You are human and you have physical, emotional, sexual and financial needs just like everyone else. An opportunity arises for you to fulfill your need and then, in a moment of weakness that impairs your judgment, you allow yourself to succumb to the behavior that you know is wrong, but. . . You have compromised your principles and are now at the mercy of your co-conspirator as to if and when the act you committed will be brought to light.

Hindsight is always 20/20, and you realize you were wrong in what you did. The question now becomes, "What do you do about it?" You cannot undo what you did. You must do whatever it takes to make the situation right. *Do it!*

④ DON'T "KILL THE MESSENGER"

When obstacles arise, you need to hear all of the unpleasant details surrounding the issue. The "bearer of bad news" has no intention of causing problems for you. Instead, this individual is doing you a great service by giving you the facts and other information that you need to know in order to respond in a manner that is suitable for the situation. Often, your followers might be hesitant to share bad news with you for fear of mis-directed reprisal toward them. Therefore, you may not receive the information in a timely fashion, or you may not receive it at all. When the situation occurs, even though they may have prior knowledge of the event, they may act as surprised as you in order to protect themselves.

It is OK to be angry upon hearing bad news; however, the messenger did not cause the incident to occur and probably had nothing to do with it. Treating the messenger in a negative or punitive fashion models a negative norm that could be very detrimental to you in future situations where you need to be told the truth. Keep your emotions in check and don't project your emotional response onto an innocent follower. Remember, STOP, before you act or react to a situation.

⑤ MENTOR YOUR FOLLOWERS - DON'T CONTROL THEM

Your followers come to you from varied backgrounds and have a variety of reasons why they have chosen you as their mentor. You have the “power position” in the relationship by virtue of your knowledge, experience and position. Your followers are excited about learning from you, may possibly be in awe of you and are ripe to give their power to you. They may be even more vulnerable because of their experiential “baggage” they have been carrying around through life. After experiencing set backs, failures, betrayals and other negative situations, they may be searching for something or someone in which to believe. This makes abuse of your power a potential problem.

You must take great care to monitor the relationship as it evolves with your followers. Be supportive, yet challenging. Allow them to be who they are and accept them for what they are. However, you must facilitate growth in their areas of development. See the potential that each of your followers has as well as their strengths and developmental areas. Allow them to ***retain their individuality within the context of your guiding parameters***. You are like a diamond cutter who takes the untouched potential of the raw diamond and expertly cuts and polishes it to increase its value.

Some leaders create a culture of dependency with their followers in the organizations they create. They provide ***perks*** or rewards to show their appreciation of their followers for their “loyalty.” These perks can be financial such as high salaries, raises, retirement or medical benefits, housing or car allowances, promotions and/or increased status. Once followers become accustomed to the comfortable life style associated with the membership and expectations of the leader's organization, it is difficult to move on to other potential opportunities. Likewise, the leader's expectations of the roles and responsibilities of the followers increases with the increase in status and money. There is a feeling of dependency that evolves, and the welfare of the group becomes the priority issue that must be sustained. The ***golden handcuffs*** have been applied and the love/hate relationship begins. The group has become out of balance with the focus on the group. Individuality demonstrated by status members is tolerated to a point. Conformity becomes the norm and peer pressure is applied to those who question things.

Be careful not to lose sight of the balance in the relationships you have with your followers. Yes, you need to have control in the culture you establish for the group. However, you must remember they are not yours to control. Allow them to be themselves. Supportively challenge them to grow. Otherwise, they will resent you.

⑥ MUTUAL RESPECT vs BLIND LOYALTY

This point goes hand in hand with point #5. Some leaders maintain their control over their followers through a culture of fear. Their system of rewards and punishments is a means of applying pressure to *motivate* them to meet the expectations of the leader. The definition of *loyalty*, as the leader may subscribe to it, usually means *unquestioning commitment* to the leader and the vision. There is nothing wrong with followers being committed to a cause, but when the leader asks the followers to cross the ethical, moral or legal boundaries in collusive arrangements, *this is wrong*. Your followers are not there to help you progress on your path through participating in negative acts. If you expect this, then you are using your leadership skills as an “opportunity” leader. Blind loyalty breeds conformity through fear and your quest to achieve your vision will eventually crumble because of the lack of trust and true commitment by your followers.

Creating a culture of *mutual respect* is a more concrete way of insuring that your followers will be committed to you and your vision. In this environment, your followers voluntarily commit themselves to your vision, you mentor them and help them to develop their potential and eventually seek ways to assist them in their quest to achieve their vision. You, as the leader, must be careful not to put your followers in circumstances that would cause them any ethical, moral or legal dilemmas that could jeopardize or compromise their character. You will model *doing the right thing* even if it hurts you in some way. Your followers will appreciate your integrity and your concern for their well-being. You will be rewarded with a stronger bond of trust, respect and commitment from your followers.

⑦ GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Although you are the leader with the vision, as you create your “organization,” your followers will provide you with an endless supply of ideas for moving the organization closer to your vision. Some leaders may feel uncomfortable by their lack of credentials, experience or expertise. Competent followers who demonstrate more leadership than the formal leader, are sometimes viewed as a threat to the power base of the leader. Credible ideas presented will be outwardly downplayed by the leader, but secretly “filed” for use in the future according to the timetable of the leader. The leader will possibly update and revise the original idea of the follower and manipulate the facts when presenting this new idea thought of by the leader. In other circumstances, the leader might just kill the idea altogether. Even though it might be a great idea, if it didn’t come from the leader, it will not be pursued. These actions are not the actions of a true leader, but are those of an insecure individual in a position of leadership.

When a great idea is proposed, give the individual full credit for his creativity. Also, reward the individual for his *initiative*. You will reinforce the norm of creativity and breed more confidence and competence with your followers.

⑧ THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Since all of your followers/employees have different strengths and developmental areas, you have to manage each differently according to their talents and competence. A leader should try to remain objective when dealing with the task and people issues that surface. Objectivity helps the leader to make the tough decisions that need to be made in order to further the vision. It is tough to be objective.

What can cloud your ability to be an effective leader is having a double standard. That is, one standard for one group or individuals and another standard for everyone else. Favoritism makes for more tolerance of unacceptable behavior exhibited by certain individuals protected by the leader. Individuals with favored status include close friends, family and individuals linked romantically, socially or in other ways with the leader. These relationships give rise to special favors or collusive deals that favor these individuals over regular followers/employees. The jealousy and dissension will definitely hurt the teamwork norm.

⑨ FOCUS ON THE “BIGGER PICTURE”

As a NORMATIVE Leader, you will see things that most people will not see when trying to understand and resolve issues. You will see beyond the symptomatic issues that surface to the real problems. You will see the implications of short term versus long term solutions and will always focus on the “bigger picture” in the course of events that unfold. This is a strength you will have as a NORMATIVE Leader. That is why you must use the normative skills in helping to educate your followers to look beyond the obvious and help others to resolve the real issues they face.

⑩ KEEP AN OPEN MIND TO GROWTH

You will have acquired much knowledge and expertise in your field as you press forward toward your vision. Your normative education gives you additional expertise in assessing and managing group and individual behavior. Your “people skills” will be honed and perfected as you utilize your facilitative skills with your followers on a daily basis. You will be perceived as an expert . . . a visionary . . . a pioneer charting new territory in your field. Despite having risen to the top in your field, *there is always something you can learn*. Therefore, be open to the process of *growing beyond yourself*.

■ THE FOLLOWER: POINTS TO PONDER ■

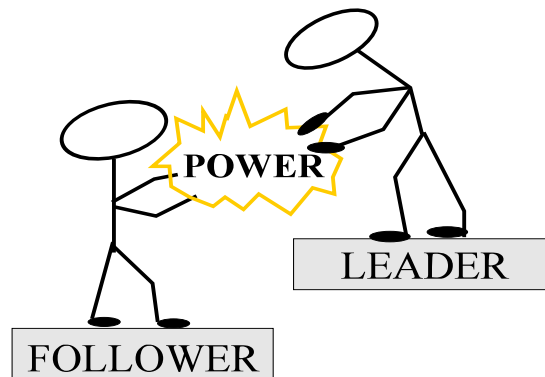
① NEVER GIVE YOUR INDIVIDUAL POWER AWAY TO THE LEADER!

Followers, by virtue of their allegiance to the leader, give the leader more opportunities to direct and control the manpower, expertise, and resources they bring to the group. The leader can then, in turn, channel these resources through an organized means to accomplish certain goals toward

achieving the vision. This is a natural process that occurs in leadership. Sometimes, the followers are asked to contribute much of themselves and their resources in order to help the group survive. For instance, in times of war, a follower’s individuality is sacrificed for the sake of the group. However, under normal circumstances, always *retain and maintain your sense of individuality*.

The norms in the group in which you are associated will determine the behavioral expectations of the group members. A leader who is too power hungry and control-oriented will devise a normative structure in the group to negate an individual’s right to retain his individuality. Although in the control phase of a group’s development, all individuals lose some sense of their individuality as the leader provides structure and direction for the group. As the norms begin to evolve individuals must choose if they want to be a part of the group. Membership entails adhering to the normative expectations. Those individuals who are not quite sure of their membership face a “norms crisis.” They must decide whether or not they agree with the vision and direction the leader is taking the group. Their choices: to leave the group, to stay and “go through the motions” until the timing is right to leave, or in time, commit themselves to the vision and become part of the group. No matter what group in which you choose to be a member, always keep this in mind:

*Remember this riddle every minute, every day,
Never, never, never give your power away!*



Ⓜ “READ AND REACT” TO THE PROCESS/POLITICS

This is one of the steps involved in conducting a 1-1 meeting with an individual. (See Chapter 6) Sometimes, the leader’s intentions in the beginning of his vision are pure and noble. However, over time, the accumulation of power and status acquired by leader gives him a false sense of invincibility. He feels he is able to do what he wants and the followers should allow this due to his position as leader. He expects “blind loyalty” from his followers. At times, this blind loyalty is exemplified by a normative expectation of acceptance of deceptive or illegal acts that are

condoned through collusive agreements to hide the truth. The leader might use monetary, status or other “personalized” rewards to reinforce the “code of silence” from the follower. When this happens, the follower sells his integrity for a price, is indebted to the leader and has become part of the conspiracy to “cover up” the truth.

A follower must be perceptive and be able to “read” the dynamics of the group as they unfold during the course of events in attaining the vision. Sometimes, the golden rhetoric of the leader’s words do not match his actions. This is when you must, as a follower, interpret the “real” purposes or hidden agendas of the leader and decide if you are willing to continue to be a part of the group. Nepotism, favoritism, hidden agendas, collusion, power plays and other “games” that are played in the work place, are all part of organizational cultures to some degree. As a NORMATIVE Leader, you have to decide how assertive you want to be given the politics of the organization or group in which you operate. In doing the right thing and challenging the negative norms, you will feel as if there are times you are walking around with a target on your back because of all of the hits you take from those on the Path of Least Resistance seeking to maintain the status quo. Read the process and react accordingly.

③ GIVE THE LEADER HONEST FEEDBACK

A leader does not always have the answer to the immediate problems at hand or those that might arise in the future due to the impending decisions of today. In order to make a more balanced decision, the leader needs to hear all of the facts regarding the situation. Therefore, it is necessary that you be honest with the leader regarding the circumstances surrounding an issue. This can be difficult given the behavior pattern of the leader. He might not appreciate the message at the time, but in time, he will appreciate your honesty.

Often, it is not so much what you say, but *how you say it* that elicits a negative emotional response from the leader. If you have a good rapport and trust level with the leader, you will develop a sense of timing regarding the best time to break the news to the leader in order to maximize the message and minimize the emotional response. This is an art that you must develop over time with the leader. *A trusted “confidant” is worth his weight in gold to the leader.*

④ ALWAYS BE A MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE.

Even though you are being mentored on the Path Seldom Taken, and your eagerness to learn and gain experience calls for you to spend many long hours developing and promoting the leader’s vision, *always take care of yourself.* As the leader’s vision becomes a reality, the obstacles seem to lessen and a long awaited sense of stability will begin to develop within the group. The excitement is still there and the creativity is flowing as the vision progresses through the evolutionary phases of its development. You will begin to reap the benefits of your hard work. The leader will reward you financially and otherwise for your loyalty and expertise. Your role and status in the leader’s “organization” will change according to the number of new followers

who join you on the path. You could very well find yourself being a coveted member of the leader's "inner circle" of key lieutenants. As the "organization" expands so too, will your responsibilities and the rewards associated with achieving success. This is where you must be careful. Your purpose in following your mentor was to gain the necessary knowledge and expertise that will enable you to eventually follow *your vision* to achieve *your purpose* in life.

You must be vigilant to not allow yourself to succumb to the lures of the *golden handcuffs*. As mentioned earlier, this is a term for the situation you might experience that can put the process of achieving your vision on hold, or eliminating it altogether. Staying too long on the Path Seldom Taken under the tutelage of your mentor, will cause this path to become the Path of Least Resistance. Your financial status has enabled you to purchase things that were at one time out of reach. You have a steady income and that adds stability to your life and that of your family or dependents. You have become accustomed to a certain life style and it may be financial suicide to risk leaving what you have for the insecurity of the Path of the NORMATIVE Leader. Therefore, take care to find the time to work on the vision that you see for yourself. Know that your circumstances and opportunities can change overnight and you may be forced to choose options that may take you further from your goals. Enjoy the opportunities while they last, but prepare for the worst. As the saying goes, "*don't put all of your eggs in one basket.*"

⑤ BE WILLING TO STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT

How far would you be willing to go in support of the actions of a leader? This is the question a follower must be ready to answer when part of a group. There should be an ethical line that you have drawn that you will not cross for the leader. You must know the difference between right and wrong and be able to sense this during the interactions you experience daily. When your *sixth sense* alerts you through that haunting feeling inside that what you are being asked to do is wrong, how will you handle your norms crisis? Support the wishes of the leader? Do nothing? Or, disagree and challenge? Are you willing to pay the price for your dissension?

To disagree and challenge negative behavior takes courage and will ultimately, cause problems for you in some way, shape or form. Your stance may thrust you into the role of a leader. You always take the risk of being chastised when you take a stance. Remember, in God's eyes you are doing the right thing and others may not say it, but deep down inside, they admire your courage and leadership. Perhaps in time, your modeling behavior will give them the courage to practice what they preach, too.

⑥ GIVE YOUR BEST

No matter what you do along the various paths you may walk in life, always give your best effort. Your work is a reflection on who you are as a person and your philosophy. Always think, *what's wrong with this picture?* You should always *leave a place better than you found it*. It may take an extra effort on your part to demonstrate that you care. That's part of becoming a NORMATIVE Leader. Doing above and beyond the call of duty will get you noticed by the

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leaders, but may cause problems with your peers. (Those norms again!) Leaders rise above the crowd. Always give 100% effort and good things will happen for you.

⑦ LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

While on your Path Seldom Taken, take advantage of the opportunity to learn as much as you can from your mentor. He is filled with knowledge and expertise in your chosen field. Every experience should be seen as a learning experience. Look for ways to create more opportunities to spend more time with your mentor. Watch and learn from how he conducts himself personally and professionally. You may incorporate some aspects of his style into your style, but remember, you cannot become who and all that he is. *You must be yourself and develop your style.*

Take the knowledge and expertise that you have gained from your mentor and *go beyond* it and improve upon it. Observe the positives and negatives of your experience and seek ways to make it better for your followers when they follow you someday on their Path Seldom Taken. In the circle of life, the *mentor will eventually become the student.* Many of my former students have taught me much about how they applied the normative concepts as leaders in their organizations. They went beyond what they learned through me and created different applications for the normative concepts. *See the opportunity and be willing to pay the price.*

⑧ KNOW WHEN TO MOVE ON

Sometimes, you can spend too much time on the Path Seldom Taken under the auspices of your mentor. You have been in training to create your own path and at some point, you should take the initiative to plan your exit. It's like the mother robin who nurtures her baby to the point where it can fly away, leave the nest of her guidance and live independently on its own. You must feel when the time is right for you to leave the nest and test your wings to become independent. This doesn't mean that you totally abandon your relationship with your mentor. Your mentor will continue to be there as a resource to you and offer advice when warranted.

Similar to Quai Chang Cain's experience, the "master" may come to you and extend his hand and say, "*take this pebble from my hand,*" knowing that you have learned all that you can under his guidance. Or, you may have reached a point, as in the Cohesive Phase Five of the Employee Transition Phases, where *you feel* it is time for you to move on and create your own path. Other times, you will see the dynamics of the group or style and/or philosophy of the leader change. Over time, these changes have made you feel like an outsider within the group. As you sense this, you know it is time for you to move on. Do not dwell on the *fear of uncertainty* as you move on during this transition. Acknowledge that fear exists, but do not allow it to paralyze you into inaction. Trust your instincts and remember that God is always with you. Things will always work out.

⑨ FOLLOW FOR THE RIGHT REASON

Your mentor has taken you under his wing. A relationship has developed. As it evolves, remember to maintain the boundaries of professionalism to keep the relationship workable. Both the leader and you have the responsibility to work at this. You can be loyal to the leader without giving your power away and allowing yourself to be used. A relationship built on mutual respect is one in which both parties will be careful not to cross the line of un-professional behavior, unless, you have a hidden agenda for pairing with the mentor.

Everyone has his own agenda for following a leader. Sometimes, these reasons are hidden under the facade of learning. Status by association, physical attraction, and power are some reasons. Under circumstances like these, the relationship becomes a one-sided arrangement that benefits the follower. Over time, the relationship will dissolve. You have the *free will* to make choices regarding your behavior in the relationship with your mentor. Remember to **STOP** and use your 20/20 hindsight in the present.

⑩ SEEK THE BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE

Know yourself. Know your strengths and limitations. Know what you can gain from an association with this mentor. Know what you can lose, also. **Be careful what you ask for in life, because you'll get it.** Know too, that you can be your worst critic and fail to realize the true abilities you have but fail to use - because of beliefs that may hold you back.

In the story of the Wizard of Oz, the scarecrow, lion and tin man went to see the wizard to get a brain, courage and a heart respectively. Their journey along the way to Oz was filled with dangerous circumstances caused by the wicked witch who wanted Dorothy's ruby slippers. They used their perceived weaknesses to out-smart the witch along the way and eventually, proved to be her downfall. When they returned to Oz to give the Wizard the broomstick of the wicked witch, they found out that the wizard was actually a fraud, and that they already had a brain, courage and a heart. However, they failed to realize this at the time. Overcoming the perils of their journey, in hindsight, proved that they didn't need an expert to give them what they already had.

So it is with you. God gives you the talent and ability to become whatever it is that you want to be. However, the beliefs you take on in life will determine just how far you will go on your path. Fear is the enemy that will hold you back - if you allow it. Have the courage to go beyond yourself and face your fears in order to overcome them and allow the true nature of who you are come alive. Although you are learning, you are setting the foundation for your eventual metamorphous into a strong, NORMATIVE Leader. Begin to challenge yourself and incorporate the necessary modifications/changes into your life that will allow you to be more *in balance* with who you really are, and what you want to become.

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