



## LEADERSHIP

By Wayne Visser

*~ Leadership is the ability to inspire individuals to act for the common good ~*

What is your definition of a good leader?

Who are the people that persuade you to serve some greater cause, to pursue some larger goal, to believe in some higher ideal?

We are all under the influence of leadership – our lives are touched by political leaders, business leaders, community leaders, religious leaders and thought leaders.

But what makes some leaders better than others?

Why do we choose to follow one and not another?

It is tempting to think of leadership in terms of charisma.

We can all think of celebrated leaders who exude a certain dynamic quality, whose combination of enthusiasm and confidence is infectious.

It is almost as if we are drawn to these leaders because their positive energy rubs off on us.

There is a halo effect that leaves us feeling uplifted, optimistic, buoyant.

We believe in them because they so clearly believe in themselves.

But not all those with charisma are leaders, and not all leaders are charismatic.

Some leaders secure our loyalty because we believe in the cause which they represent, and we can see that they are dedicated to serving that cause.

They don't need to convince us of their greatness, merely to persuade us of their effectiveness.

We are not looking so much for them to be superstars as fellow believers, people in power who share our passion for making a difference in this life, for putting wrongs right in the world.

We believe in them because they believe in our cause.

But what of leaders who are neither charismatic nor missionaries?

There is a quiet, unassuming kind of leadership which is built on earned respect.

Some leaders lead by personal example.

They demonstrate the mastery of their given field or a human quality which we seek to emulate.

We believe in them because they reflect our ideals.

They are our role models.

Others enjoy our support because it is clear that they have our best interests at heart.

These are the servant leaders among us, those rare individuals who put aside their personal ambitions in order to facilitate the development of others.

We believe in them because they believe in us.

In each case, we are inspired by leadership.

Leaders enable us to achieve together what would have been impossible alone – for leadership is the art of synergy.

Leaders allow us to see possibilities that were not on our horizon – for leadership is the gift of visioning.

Leaders encourage us to stretch to reach our potential – for leadership is the practice of empowerment.





Leaders dedicate themselves to fulfilling the needs of their followers – for leadership is the calling of service.

We are all leaders and followers in different spheres of our lives.  
As parents, we lead our children; as teachers, we lead our students; as managers, we lead our staff; as captains, we lead our teams; as volunteers, we lead our communities.

Yet to be good leaders, we must be good followers also.  
For leadership is founded on empathy.  
And for every situation in which we rise as natural leaders, there is another in which others are better placed to lead.

A true leader is humble, for they know that the mantle of leadership is a privilege bestowed on them by their followers.  
At the same time, a leader who hides their talent from the world serves no one.

Where do your leadership abilities lie?  
In what way can you serve and inspire others today?  
Don't be shy.  
You know what to do – just take the lead.



Part of the EVERYDAY INSPIRATION series

copyright 2005

