My Recipe for Leadership

Marcel Bergerman
March 2011

Searching for a Definition

- Leader:
  - A person or thing that leads, guides, or conducts
  - A person who directs an army, movement, or group
  - A person who has commanding authority or influence
- Not very helpful!
Literature Search

Showing 1 - 12 of 310,225 Results
Excerpts

• “The higher the leadership, the greater the effectiveness.”
• “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”
• “Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us.”

• Somewhat helpful

An Engineer’s Recipe To Building Leadership
The leadership building

- Vision
- Strategy
- Execution
- Evaluation

Respect

Idea
“What and why”

Schedule
Resources plan
Communication plan
“How and when”

Work tools

Management tools
Honesty
Integrity
Ethics
Humility

Relative importance

- Vision
- Strategy
- Execution
- Evaluation

Respect
**Where do I find the “ingredients?”**

- Vision
  - Mentoring
  - Trial and error ("experience")
- Strategy, Execution, Evaluation
  - Formal education
  - Coaching
- Respect
  - Can you guess?

**Experience**

- What you need to make good decisions
- What you get by making bad decisions
The only advantage of getting old...

Young person
- Decision
  - Good decision?
    - yes: Enjoy
    - no: Experience

Old person
- Decision
  - Good decision?
    - yes: Enjoy
    - no: Experience

Respect: the “foundation” ingredient

Visionary
- Humility
- Megalomaniac

Ambitious
- Ethics
- Greedy
Some random thoughts

- Ben Parker
  - “With great power comes great responsibility.”
- Bergerman’s corollary
  - “The more power you have, the more sparingly you should use it.”
- Little Prince
  - “You are responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.”
- Garbage collection
  - Follow-up!
- Quantum humility

On Responsibility

- People generalize too easily
- You are an ambassador to...
  - Yourself
  - Your family
  - Your country
  - Your profession
  - Your school
  - Your team
  - Your faith
  - Your race
- You have the power to open opportunities for a lot of people you will never meet
  - And to close them as well
- Be the one to break the generalization cycle
Pseudo-Leaders: How To Deal With Them

Growing as a Leader
Some not-so-random thoughts

• No “natural born” leaders
• To be a leader you don’t need a grandiose job
  – Family leader
  – Sports team leader
  – Neighborhood leader
  – Company leader
• Leaders can “grow” with time
• No “good” leaders or “bad” leaders

Leadership and You

• With the right foundation, anyone can be a leader
• You don’t need to be the president of the USA to be called a leader or to become one
  – Leaders are desperately needed everywhere
• Have a grand vision?
  – Make a plan
  – Gather the resources to execute it
  – Assess progress and replan if necessary
  – Be respectful
• Don’t have a grand vision?
  – Start with a small one
  – Grow to the level of leadership you feel comfortable with
Still don’t know where to start?

Become your own life’s leader!

Thank you

marcel@cmu.edu