

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GOOD LEADER

To some, the title “leader” implies a domineering, take-charge, charismatic individual. Leadership isn’t an adjective. Leadership is a mindset in action; it stems from social influence, not authority or power. Leadership has nothing to do with titles. You can be a leader in your workplace, your neighborhood, your family, and/or our organization, all without having a title.

Be Knowledgeable: It is not necessary to be an expert on everything, but basic knowledge is essential.

- Familiarize yourself with documents that govern the operation of your unit or committee
- Possess a level of familiarity with programs of the American Legion Auxiliary
- Strengthen knowledge on Parliamentary Procedure
- Know the process for the appropriation and control of money. Bad financial practices do not just hurt the organization; they can result in criminal investigations and prosecution.

Be Passionate: A good leader exhibits excitement; and through demonstrated, unswerving commitment to our vision, instills hope and inspiration to other members. A good leader “walks the talk” and in doing so, earns the right to lead.

Listen: If you exhibit a proper attitude in listening, really listening to your members, the potential for identifying new opportunities will emerge. Instill in yourself, and others, that listening is an opportunity to grow. In the end, your success as a leader will be predicated upon your ability to listen and understand the viewpoint of others.

Have a Positive Attitude: Leaders should have an upbeat, optimistic attitude that serves as a source of inspiration for others. If leaders seem discouraged or apathetic, members are likely to also become uninspired and demotivated.

- Be a cheerleader. Motivate others by your enthusiasm.
- Follow up with your members to ensure they are achieving the goals, objectives, and milestones established.

Lead with Integrity: A good leader must possess unquestionable character and lead with integrity. Integrity gives you so much as a leader; credibility, trust, confidence, influence, and more.

Lead by Example: Who says leadership is a one-way relationship? As you work toward developing leadership qualities in yourself, don’t forget to look to your fellow members for feedback and inspiration.

- Pay attention to the things that have been effective in the past and always be on the lookout for new ways to inspire, motivate, and reward your members.
- Be willing to delegate responsibility – use the talents of others!
- Always instill a climate of goodwill.
- Be respectful. Remember those all-important “shout outs” to deserving members and certainly the two most important words — thank you.
- Do you care about your members and strive to help build leadership capacity in them?

Be Confident: Be aware of the way and manner which you present yourself. Bearing is everything! Be confident and decisive in your decision-making. Members will pick up on your approach to leadership and find reassurance, clear direction, and security when a leader portrays confidence and positive demeanor.

Act Professionally: As a leader, you should be cordial to all of your members. You should also recognize the importance of dressing appropriately, showing up for meetings on time, and communicating in a professional manner. Your goals and expectations should be clear from the beginning. Members will be more motivated and less confused. Ask for input. Tell them that their perspective is crucial to your success.