

Leadership Barometer 155 Are You a Great Leader? **Robert T. Whipple, MBA CPTD**



You may be a good leader, or possibly a great leader, or you may be an awful leader. One thing is clear: your own opinion of your worth as a leader is not to be trusted.

I have studied the traits of leaders for over 40 years. I have studied leadership from the inside out and the outside in. This education has led me to conclude that there are signposts or primary indicators of people who are elite leaders.

Test Your Leadership

Answer these eight questions honestly.

1. Are you a magnet for high potential people?

Great leaders are so much fun to be around and to work for that the very best people are clamoring for a chance to work for them. Great leaders are eternally passionate about developing people (including themselves).

2. Are you having the most fun of your life?

Poor leaders struggle against the demands of the job. Great leaders are relaxed and having a ball. They enjoy being themselves and performing at a high rate without fretting about being perfect. They are more focused on growing other leaders and doing what they believe is right.

3. Do you live the values at all times?

The cauldron of every crisis and urgency is precisely when it is most important to model the values. Great leaders know and do this.

4. Do you continually invest in higher trust?

Trust is the lubricant that allows organizations to work amid the cacophony of seemingly conflicting friction and priorities. Great leaders know trust depends on them and invest in it every single moment without failure.

5. Do you readily admit mistakes?

When the chips are down, few leaders actually have the capability to admit a mistake. Instead, try to find ways to deflect culpability.

6. Do you listen deeply?

Most leaders consider themselves good listeners. Unfortunately, the majority of leaders do a very poor job of listening. They are leaders, and that means they feel a need to lead conversations and actions. Great leaders listen more than they speak.

7. Do you build a truly genuine reinforcing culture?

The rules of good reinforcement are well known. Many leaders exude a kind of plastic reinforcement that is manipulative in its intent.

8. Do you hold people accountable the right way?

Most people do good or excellent work, yet they are held “accountable” only when they mess up. If we changed the paradigm such that people are accountable for the positive things as well as the shortcomings, it would change the entire equation. I call this skill “holding people procountable.”

Conclusion

There are literally thousands of leadership behaviors that make up the total performance characteristics for any leader. I believe if you can honestly answer “YES!” to all eight of the above questions, you are one of the elite leaders of our time. Congratulations!

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations