

SAN JACINTO RIVER AUTHORITY KIDS PAGE

LEADERSHIP...



What it is and why it is so important?

Can you name five people that you consider to be leaders? What makes them stand out? What qualities do they have that signify leadership? Do you think anyone can be a leader if they try? Do you want to be a leader when you grow up?

Leadership is a term we hear all the time, but it has a variety of definitions. As a young student, we might view leadership qualities very differently than we will when we finish college and enter the workforce. On the playground, for example, a youngster who has athletic ability and is often selected as a team captain might be called a leader. Just as a good student who participates in class government might earn that description.

Here are 10 characteristics that people identify as necessary to becoming a successful leader.

- 1. Honesty.** People are not likely to follow someone they cannot trust. This critical characteristic isn't something that can be bestowed on a person -- you have to earn it. One way to do that is to make sure that your words match your deeds.
- 2. Integrity.** The first cousin of honesty. Some will say that it means being strong and fair, but this says it best: Integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is looking!
- 3. Respect.** R-E-S-P-E-C-T. So important we even sing about it. This is something else that must be earned. Respect involves showing consideration and appreciation, and valuing yourself, others and the world around you.
- 4. Confidence.** Don't confuse this trait with being conceited or overly egotistic. You have to believe in yourself or no one else will! Here's an important tip: having the confidence to say "I don't know" can be a powerful skill!
- 5. Positive Attitude.** Thinking about life as a glass being half full...not half empty. The ability to see the

good in people and situations, and to be able to convince others to have that view, as well.

6. Caring/Compassion. The strongest leaders are known not only for caring about themselves and their families, but for caring about others in their community, as well. They have compassion about how their actions or decisions impact others.

7. Sense of Humor. Being able to find humor in even challenging situations is an important leadership quality. And being able to laugh at yourself in difficult times or over a mistake tells others that you are comfortable in "your own skin" and don't take yourself overly seriously. In a team situation, humor

can go a long way toward building morale and productivity.

8. Creativity. Thinking outside the box. Unleashing your imagination. It is important; however, to channel imagination toward planning goals and achieving them. This process helps transform imagination into reality and provides solid direction.

9. Passion. Webster's Dictionary defines it as *having, showing, or expressing strong emotions or beliefs*. This word

brings all the leadership characteristics into play. What can be more exciting and empowering than having absolute confidence and belief in a goal or objective?

10. Communication. Rule number one is to know what you're talking about if you expect people to pay attention to what you say or stand for. Real leaders don't try to get away with substituting fast talk for the truth. Here's rule number two: make sure that your message is true, accurate and correct; that it is well thought-out and reasonable; and that it is leading toward a specific goal or logical objective. It is how a person communicates that allows others to observe whether he or she possesses all those important leadership characteristics after all. ■

