

How do we become better leaders? An effective leader is someone who can create an inspiring vision, motivate and inspire their team, manage the delivery of that shared purpose and then coach and improve that team in order to achieve that end goal. So what are the best leadership skills, and what are the keys to becoming a better leader?

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

According to research, there are loads of different leadership styles and they vary between men and women. However, 4 main styles have been commonly agreed. These four leadership styles include autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and transformational. By finding out what type of leader you are, you will then be able to identify your strengths and areas in which you need to improve.

Autocratic

This leadership style includes, close supervision, lack of input from followers, complete control and solo decision-making.

Democratic

This leadership style includes, shared decision-making responsibilities, social equality, creativity and high engagement from group members.

Laissez-faire

This style includes little direction from the leader, lots of freedom for group members, team members are responsible for making all decisions and a great deal of autonomy.

Transformational-better-leader

People who have this leadership style are often described as energetic, passionate, enthusiastic, trustworthy, creative and intelligent.

A more in-depth description of these styles can be found [here](#).

2. Be a role model

This doesn't necessarily mean leading from the front, as keeping a watchful eye from a distance can allow your team to develop their own forms of leadership and management strategies. This point refers to the way you, as the leader, exemplify your behaviours and characteristics for your team to follow. Your actions can have a profound impact on the behaviours of your team. Research has shown that by showing your organisation what is possible, a leader can empower them to develop their own skill sets.

3. Be authentic

Being authentic in your approach to leadership provides your group with a true understanding of who you are as a person, away from your professional role. Research has shown that by doing what is promised, being visible to your organisation and being honest helps manifest a sense of trust within the group you're leading. Be true to your values and in doing so, your team can understand the direction you want to take them in.

4. Listen to, and communicate with, your team

Research has shown that non-verbal cues like body language, facial expressions, eye movement and hand motions are an important form of communication. Matching your non-verbal cues to your actions and words can help with authenticity.

Whilst verbally and non-verbally communicating with your team, it is also important to listen to what they have to offer. Be an active listener, in doing so approach conversations with concentration and regard for the speaker's thoughts and considerations. Likewise, studies have shown that skilled listeners also pick up on the speaker's underlying thoughts and concerns by tuning into their non-verbal cues, showing genuine care for the person's feelings and morale.

5. Motivate your team

Leaders can motivate people in various ways, but by making sure the individuals inside the team understand that their investment of time and effort is something worthwhile, and can encourage the desired actions. Evidence indicates that this can be done by providing recognition and praise, offering rewards, inclusion and by being passionate.

Final thought

John F. Kennedy once said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." Highlighting how leadership is a constant learning process and that it can most definitely be taught. Anyone can become a great leader as long as you are willing to listen and learn.