

To be quite honest, I do not know what a real leader is like. I have heard about leaders, I have read about leaders, even had others tell me that someone is a leader to them. It is easy to pin point characteristics that an idyllic leader may have; trustworthiness, integrity, confidence, and care for those he or she is leading, plans and hope, always growing and improving, etc. Have I, however, seen exemplifiers of these traits? Unfortunately, I have not. I have seen glimmers of these in people; they are, sooner or later, devoured by a cruel society and the spirit of pessimism.

One of my favorite bible stories is of Esther. She was a girl who unexpectedly became queen. She was nervous and humble and when she found out her whole family and culture was in danger of being killed and destroyed she over-came nerves and stood up proudly to protect her family. To me, that is what leadership is; being able to overcome fears and sadness and things that seem too big for us. There are many people in my life who I have looked up to and they seem bold, smart, and strong, but one little thing gets to them and they let it eat at them and eat at them until they have given up.

William Shakespeare had this to say of leadership, "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," (act II, scene V, Twelfth Night). I agree with Shakespeare to a very large degree. There are some that are born great, with personalities worth a thousand watts of energy. It is what they do with that greatness that sets them up for leadership. There are individuals who break the mold of the expected leader. My sister and I are a perfect example.

My sister was born with freckles and smiling eyes that a blind person could not miss; when she walks into a room people gather toward her. People come to her for solace, information, and advice. She is a born leader. What will she lead? Who will she lead? Those answers are still unknown, even to her, but I am confident that she is a leader and I hope that the burdens of the world will not get to her.

I, on the other hand, was born with a quiet voice and a reluctant spirit. Life experiences have been hard on me though, and my compassionate heart has been beaten up quite a bit. I see hurt and void and I want to change that. I have had many people tell me that I am very wise for my age and I want to use that wisdom to inspire thought in people. I have overcome my trials and I want to help others that are struggling through the same things.

I do not believe in manifest destiny or anything of the sort. I definitely believe that the title of leader must be one that is earned. But there are many who are born with great potential to achieve leadership positions and father change.

If I never see someone else move beyond short comings and discouragement and become a leader in my eyes, I hope that I see myself do so.