

As I sit back and reflect on the world around me all I see is utter chaos. I see a nation that has become so absorbed in materialistic matters that its financial (role models) have cheated people out of millions, a place where education has taken the backseat to a war, where genocide was ignored, and all I'm left with is the question; How? How is it that all around the globe more bad than good is being accomplished? The answer lies in the void of true leaders in society. Leadership isn't a majority vote, nor is it a popularity contest, leadership is a privilege that cannot be given out. In order for true leadership to be obtained it must first be earned. When speaking in terms of earning leadership a foundation must first be secured before proceeding forward with the building. The foundation I'm speaking of begins with trust; trust, along with leadership, is only tangible when proven worthy of it. If an individual seeking leadership can remain C.R.I.P (Committed, Responsible, Integrity, and Persistence) and trustworthy then and only then can any change have hope.

C.R.I.P. is a phrase that contains four of the essential characteristics people look for in a person they are willing to follow. These four simple words can make all the difference in whether a leader will succeed or fail. Being committed to a specific goal or direction that will better the greater good is the beginning. Commitment involves relations with others and being able to instill your passion within them. Secondly, responsibility for yourself and others who represent you will further support the commitment you possess and help gain trust. Responsibility is a characteristic that can be taught, or learned, and will prove that you are productive toward your main goal. Following responsibility, but not necessarily in that order, is integrity. Integrity is one of the most lacked characteristics in recent leaders. Having the strength to stand up to what is wrong, even if that means loss of money, friends, or a job makes a bigger statement than to easily succumb to pure pressure. Lies, cheating and stealing are one of the quickest ways to lose someone's trust. Having morals and standards and living up to them will show others that you will do the right things for them, no matter the costs. Lastly, but not least important, is persistence in moving forward. People have developed a sense of knowing what to say, but lack the ability to follow through and make the goal happen. To constantly review what it is you are striving for and check and re-check the steps you have taken to reach your goal will add credibility to your name and your purpose. If a person can apply C.R.I.P. to themselves others will notice the refreshing qualities of commitment, responsibility, integrity, and persistence and that will help open the door to becoming a great leader.

A proposed issue of leadership can be found in the education systems. Educational opportunities are alive and well in the United States; the issue at hand is the quality of these education systems. The community is pushing to receive grants from the government to build more school systems. What is the point of building more schools and wasting money when the dropout rate of ethnic students is roughly 50 percent. Why pay money to further mediocrity. What if instead of building more schools we invested the grant money back into the current schools and provide role models for these students who can reignite the importance of education in them. Lack of leadership isn't the problem here, it is lack of understanding. First and foremost the issue needs to be addressed by someone who will be C.R.I.P. in bettering the future of this community and then this problem will have hope of moving from a tragedy to an inspiration.

Chelsea Rose
The Challenge of Leadership
March 11, 2010

Over the past week I've been working with my peers on a presentation covering chapter five and six in the book, The Leadership Challenge by Kouzes and Posner. These chapters covered how to envision the future and how to enlist others.

During my preparation for this presentation I have developed a better understanding of how to capture others in my vision. Two examples the book referred to were appealing to common ideals and evolving others in my vision. While I understand the importance of both these steps toward becoming a good leader, I feel the purposes of them are too similar to consider them different steps. Appealing to common ideals is important because it will bring everyone together, get everyone on the same page, and will help direct the groups focus. I also see this as the process of becoming a team. The importance of having a group of people working as a team verses as individuals could be a make or break for the vision. Team means more than just working as a group; team means together everyone achieves more. Getting everyone involved allows for a more productive progress. This is where point number two, "enlisting others", come into play.

Enlisting others starts with the individual. Having a firm understanding of yourself and what you're about shows a confidence that draws others in. Dr. Rodriguez (2001), speaks of how to reach personal and mutual success, in an article titled What's Trust Got to Do With It?, he states that "...allowing individuals to be in charge of their own career destinies" at the same time, "meeting and exceeding the institutional and personal goals through a shared vision" is what leaders need to figure out. Sometimes, it seems, that leaders get so self absorbed in their own goals that the individuals that are helping to obtain the goal are pushed aside. More times than not one negative person or attitude can spread like wildfire in a team. If we apply what Dr. Rodriguez talks about and take into consideration the needs and ideas, of teammates it will help make everyone feel important. Also by allowing people to be themselves and accepting them for who they are, not what they should be will one contribute to group success.

In conclusion envisioning and enlisting are not only important in reaching success, but are also a necessity in every team. Understanding one common goal, how to embrace each person's individuality and the important quality of each group member posses will make for a strong team that will produce great results.

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