

# 9

# Leadership Steps You Should Take

**Maren Schmidt, M.Ed.**

[MarenSchmidt.com](http://MarenSchmidt.com)

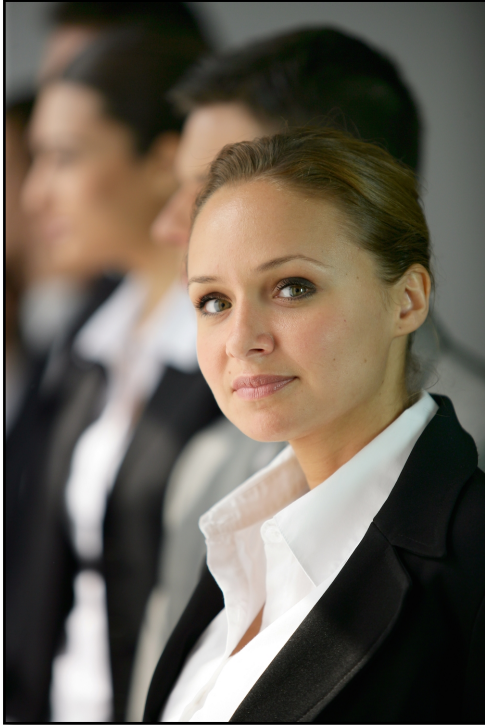


# 9 Leadership Steps You Should Take

## Table Of Contents:

<b>The Best Test Of Leadership</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leaders Innovate</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Leaders Grow</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Leaders Listen</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Leaders Respond</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Leaders Have Spirit</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Leaders Have Imagination</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Leaders Take Risks</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Leaders Are Committed</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Leaders Lead</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Lead Or Manage?</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>About Maren Schmidt</b>	<b>35</b>

## The Best Test Of Leadership



Every four years, as we enter into our presidential election cycle, we are deluged with daily details about various candidates for a variety of offices. Our minds may turn to the idea of leadership, or the lack of leadership, as the case may be.

The reality of leadership is that it begins within the individual, and that means you. And me.

Yes, you—the person in the mirror.

That's where the buck truly stops, and leadership truly begins. This could be a discomforting thought, or it could be a first step towards personal freedom and more.

Leadership lies not in the heart of any particular organization or political persuasion, but instead emerges from the core of each individual. Leadership corresponds to personal passion and empowering others to find their own purpose.

Thankfully, leadership is not dependent on a body of elected officials or other organizations. Leadership resides in the individual choosing and endeavoring to follow a path that aligns principles, values, and the needs of others.

Leadership is not a contained global vision. Leaders use their individuality and imaginations to envision a common goal and find a path for others to follow.

Leadership cannot be found in a pep rally. It emerges not from frenzied hurrahs but from an individual conscience desiring to model a life well lived with self-respect and respect for others.

**There are many definitions of leadership.**

Stephen Covey said, "Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves."

Peter Drucker said, "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers."

John Maxwell says, "Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less."

It all begins by leading yourself, seeing your own worth and potential, following your own directives, and influencing your behavior.

Too often the terms leadership and management are used interchangeably:

- Leadership is about doing the right things.
- Management is about doing things right.
- Leadership is about dealing with change.
- Management is about changing the deal.
- Leadership chooses where we are going.
- Management plans when and how we will arrive.

To be effective leaders we must know how to effectively lead and manage. Without leadership, we manage the wrong things. Without management we never move our vision ahead.

As parents and teachers—the leaders of our children—we must instill a vision into our families of each member's worth and potential. As leaders we must be disciplined and willing to sacrifice for that vision. When times get tough we must take our passion, our discipline and our commitment to see our vision through.

**Building family and community are the best tests of leadership.**

If we fail our children through lack of leadership, even if we accomplish our goals in other parts of our life, we may find that those achievements never fulfill us in the joyful way that building family and community does.

Making small adjustments to our daily lives in terms of our vision, passion, discipline and conscience can have payback in ways that will appear amazing in a generation. Building family and community builds a better world.

For the sake of our children, I challenge you to take these important nine steps to become a leader.

## Leaders Innovate



Making small adjustments in our lives in terms of vision, discipline, passion and conscience provide big payback on our leadership growth and abilities. Vision requires

our mental skills of using imagination and curiosity. Discipline in turn uses our mind to control our physical challenges. Passion arrives when we find purpose in our lives. Conscience deals with matters of reason and free will.

Leaders innovate. They try new ideas. They listen to other's point of view. If something doesn't work, they try something else. Leaders don't have to be geniuses, but they put into action Einstein's advice of "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

As leaders of our families—the best test of leadership—we must have a compelling vision of what and how we want our family to be. If something is not working for our family, we don't have to follow patterns established by our parents, our jobs, our schools, our churches or our communities. We can innovate.

Our big question around which our vision, discipline, passion and conscience will converge is this:

***What do we really want for our family and our children?***

Get a group of twenty parents together, ask this question, and you will discover that what parents really want for their children is this:

Parents want their children to have certain time-tested aspects of character that will help children be resilient to whatever circumstances they find themselves, at any time in their lives.

***What are these character traits we want for our children?***

- To have the ability to enjoy life
- To value themselves
- To be risk takers; to be self-reliant
- To be free from stress and anxiety
- To have loving, peaceful lives
- To celebrate their present moments
- To experience a lifetime of wellness
- To be creative, and
- To fulfill their higher needs and to feel a sense of purpose.

To get what we really want, sometimes we have to think differently.

For Rebecca in her growing up years, Saturday mornings had been family house-cleaning and chore time followed by a family outing. With fondness, Rebecca had continued this tradition with her own children. Resentment, though, was running high because her twin ten-year-old boys wanted to be on swim team which required Saturday morning practices

and meets, as well as money. Rebecca's answer to the boys' request was a flat out "no." Her husband, John, didn't want to discuss the situation with her.

When the tension in the family became too high because of Rebecca's resistance to the boys' continued insistence to join swim team, Rebecca luckily had a leadership realization. Rebecca saw that she was trying to manage her sons, instead of leading them to see their worth and potential.

Rebecca and John called a family meeting to discuss the swim team problem. Rebecca started, "Your dad and I see that you really want to be on swim team, but we are not willing to give up important family time. We'd like to see what ideas we can come up with as a family so that we can have all our needs met."

After a discussion of several solutions, the family chose to do a two-month trial of changing the Saturday morning chores to Thursday night in order for Saturdays to be free for swimming. Family outing time was scheduled for Saturday afternoons.

When Rebecca made the decision to be open to new ideas from her sons, and not focus as much on controlling the schedule and managing details, a win-win solution emerged.

Rebecca and her family found that discussing and making small adjustments helped create the family they envisioned—each member helping each other discover their worth and potential.

## Leaders Grow



Research shows that it takes a minimum of 10,000 hours of focused practice to become a master musician, artist, dancer...parent, teacher, or leader.

One of the first steps in becoming a leader is realizing that proficiency requires a significant amount of time, commitment and dedication. How much time is 10,000 hours? Practice eight hours a day and that figure translates to 1,250 days or about three-and-a-half years. That's assuming eight hours a day with a leadership attitude!

Your initial sphere of influence as a leader is small. Stretch out your arms horizontally to the floor, turn around, look in the mirror and there is your beginning sphere of influence.

You. Your ideas, your thoughts, your actions, your habits, your character, your life. The most important person you will ever lead or influence is yourself. And the most difficult person? You guessed it. Yourself.

We grow our sphere of influence by asking a key question—What is the best thing I can do under these set of circumstances?

Leadership is a choice, not a position, and once we make the choice to lead and empower ourselves to direct our lives, we begin to enlarge our sphere of influence to include items of personal concern—our families, our friends, our jobs—that grow over time to include our community and the larger world.

Daily, as we ask the key question, What's the best thing to do?, we need to consider the level of initiative to use. Stephen Covey in *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit* tells us of seven levels of initiative, the lowest being:

- Wait until told, then,
- Ask,
- Make a recommendation,
- I intend to,
- Do it and report immediately,
- Do it and report periodically, and ending with,
- Do it.

Perhaps using a child's development will help us gain insight into our personal growth.

Let's consider three-year-old Jacob who wants to help in the kitchen. At the first level, Jacob waits until he is told to do something and shown how to do it. Jacob learns to perform such tasks as setting the table, learning to slice fruits and vegetables, load the dishwasher, stir batter, and drop cookies onto a cookie sheet.

Even as a three-year-old Jacob would work through these seven levels of initiative as his skills grow. He'll ask to set the table. He might

recommend setting the table differently. He could tell you he intends to set the table. Jacob could set the table and report back immediately, or periodically. At the final initiative level, Jacob would be independent and do it without being told, reminded or anything else. He would just do it.

Day by day, year-by-year, Jacob's skills and sphere of influence grow by learning new skills, practicing them, and discovering ways to use those skills to help himself and others. At some point, perhaps age nine, Jacob would have learned all the skills to independently prepare a family meal.

As adult leaders, we grow by:

- Asking ourselves continually, what is the best thing to do?
- Understanding our skill levels and working each day to build proficiency.
- Understanding our sphere of influence and maximize our work in that area.
- Using the seven levels of initiative to understand how to best approach each task in current circumstances.

As leaders, as we grow to know, the Serenity Prayer might guide us:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

## Leaders Listen



As we examine the leader in the mirror, we should see improvement and growth as we work to enlarge our sphere of influence by learning and practicing new skills based on principles that represent the people and

causes we value most.

To grow as a leader we must have integrity, empathy, and critical thinking skills to create understanding. The Greeks called this set of skills *ethos, pathos, and logos*.

*Ethos* pertains to creating trust and confidence in others. Do we walk our talk? Do we keep our promises? Do we live a life guided by principles that others can clearly see?

*Pathos* is concerned with understanding another person's feelings, needs, and requests.

*Logos* involves the logical thinking skills to problem solve as well as implementing solutions.

The ancient Greeks saw the skills of *ethos, pathos and logos* as the pathway to developing a vibrant community with effective leadership.

When we have and use ethos people trust us enough to tell us their true feelings, needs and requests in order to make their lives better. With pathos we become skilled listeners as we hear each person's point of view in order that we may try to figure out how to make life better for that person or organization—be it an organization of two or two thousand people. Using logos helps us possess the thinking skills to see the logical consequences and impact of making the changes requested.

If we try to short cut this process, we may see our efforts to effect change be met with resistance or rebellion.

The leadership step that most of want to jump over is usually the pathos, or listening step. Using pathos can seem to be time-consuming but when we listen effectively, the logos or problem-solving step seems to flow easily. When we do meet with resistance we have a signal that we need to listen again, and use those pathos skills.

As adults, we may desire to “fix” our children's problems without listening to their input about the situation. Not asking for input diminishes our ethical impact with our children. Children quickly sniff out insincerity. Not picking up on clues—verbal and non-verbal—tends to lower our credibility. Listening and asking the right questions are vital to our leadership.

George and Martha had grounded their eight-year-old son, Dennis, after hearing from neighbors that Dennis had been riding his bike on a busy street that was strictly off limits. George sent Dennis to his room, and told Dennis that he would miss afterschool playtime for a week, and he

wouldn't be able to ride his bike for a month. Day two of the punishment saw Dennis climbing out his bedroom window. Grounding was extended another week. Day three Dennis threw things in his room and yelled. Day four, Granddad Don appeared and asked Dennis if they could visit. Dennis reluctantly agreed and his grandfather began making an ethical appeal.

"Dennis, you know that as my grandson, you are one of the most important people in my world. When I see you having problems, I want to help you. So tell me, what kind of problems are you having?"

"Mom and Dad won't listen to me. They believe someone else instead of me. I'm just always in trouble."

Dennis' grandfather listened and only asked questions to clarify what Dennis was trying to communicate in terms of his feelings, needs and requests. He listened in order to hear Dennis' point of view. As he listened he learned that Dennis hadn't been on that street on that day, though Dennis had been on the street a few weeks earlier. "I just want my parents not to think it is always me when somebody does something wrong."

Granddad Don listened empathetically until Dennis defined his own problem and solution. Dennis asked his grandfather to confirm that Dennis was at a friend's house the day of the bike incident, and asked his granddad to communicate that to his parents. Later, Dennis with his granddad and parents explored ways to become more trustworthy.

Ethos, pathos and logos. Leadership skills that help others help themselves.

## Leaders Respond



Responsibility. Think of responsibility as being able to respond with ability.

As leaders, if we are to respond with ability, we must have certain skills, knowledge and

attitudes. We must cultivate a habit of enlarging, as well as focusing, vital attitudes, knowledge and skills. To know and not to do, is really not to know. Knowledge requires skills to be put into action with a 'can-do' attitude.

If we are to shoulder the responsibility of being and becoming a leader, we have to be prepared to respond to the needs of those around us—ourselves included.

Understanding the needs of others requires that we first listen to gain accurate information about a person or group. What we think someone needs and what the person thinks he or she needs can be quite different. When we respond to a perceived need versus a real need, we can inadvertently create a situation where the person being helped may feel overpowered on one side, and powerless on the other.

We can learn and teach the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for responsibility by adhering to these two adages:

- 1) Help me help myself.
- 2) Any unnecessary help is a hindrance.

As we lead and help people grow, we should focus on their building of independence and concentration. A simple question to ask ourselves before any interaction: Is this going to help this person be more independent as well as strengthen their ability to bring intense mental focus to a situation? If the answer is yes to both these questions we will feel that we are on solid ground to move ahead.

Seven-year-old Tom wanted a beagle puppy. His mother, Janni, was not excited about the idea. At all.

Janni saw herself as becoming the dog's main caregiver and walking a dog in the snow along with housebreaking wasn't on her to-do list. Tom thought Janni's refusal to allow him a dog as unfair. Janni, though, came up with a solution to help Tom gain the independence and concentration to be a successful dog owner through developing his knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Janni asked Tom if he'd be willing to work to show that he had what it took to take care of a dog, warning Tom that it might take a year or more to learn what he needed to care for a dog. Janni gave Tom a three-foot ficus tree that he was responsible for keeping alive and growing for a year. For the next week, Janni talked about the needs of a plant—light, warmth, water and nutrients. They discussed pests from aphids to rats, to

wind and rain. Janni told Tom the plant was his and she would not remind him to water or pay any attention to it. It was his responsibility.

Tom also was asked to walk the neighbors dog everyday after school and on the weekends, and make arrangements if he couldn't do it for some reason. Janni and Tom searched out books and videos about how to take care of a dog needs, not just physically but mentally, emotionally and socially.

Over the course of a year, Tom developed the independence and focus to have the skills, knowledge and attitude to let his parents know that he would be able to care responsibly for his beagle, Toby.

Janni's leadership created a win/win situation.

## Leaders Have Spirit



One definition of spirit is "a particular mood or emotional state characterized by vigor and animation." As leaders we need to have enthusiasm for the work we are doing, the

people we are working with, and the place where we work and play. As leaders we model to our children what it means to be a healthy adult in body, heart, mind and spirit.

There are times when we will have to act more animated than we perhaps feel. Especially after being up all night with a sick child or not feeling at the top of our game ourselves. But enthusiasm is infectious, and a little bit can go a long way.

One of my twelve-year-old students took a manners and ballroom dancing class and memorized a set of guidelines for being a convivial guest. One of the rules that stuck in my mind was "enter into the spirit of the event." If the event is a dance, get out there and boot and scoot. If it's a costume party, dress up and act the part. If it's an opera, study up a bit and become familiar with the storyline and libretto. And if it's your life,

what better advice could you have than “enter into the spirit of the event?”

No event to really bring out your enthusiasm? Dale Carnegie suggested that we practice acting enthusiastic by taking a week and exaggerating exuberance. Perhaps 100 times more than we actually feel. Carnegie recommended that we put 100 times more energy into our movements, our tone of voice, and our smiles on every topic for seven days. At the end of the week, what we should see is life and leadership appearing rosier and more rewarding, along with a habit of enthusiasm.

Things aren’t going well? Well, go fishing.

You might have heard of the fish market where they throw fish? At Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle a spirit of enthusiasm is key to the way this business is run. Stephen Lundin wrote the book, *Fish!*, in order to explain Fish! Philosophy:

- Be There.
- Play.
- Make Their Day.
- Choose Your Attitude.

Four interconnected practices for leadership.

**Be There** is about being totally present for the people around you. Being there sends a powerful message of respect—respect on which communication and relationships are built.

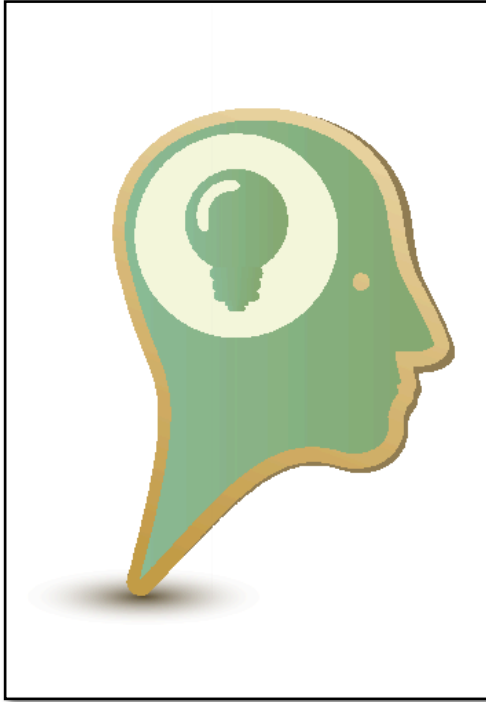
**Play** gives us permission to have fun, be creative, make mistakes and show our enthusiasm. Using the practice of play lets us play with ideas versus working on them, and helps us find creative solutions.

**Make Their Day** is a practice that focuses on finding simple ways to delight people in meaningful and memorable ways.

**Choose Your Attitude** helps us practice the idea of choosing how we will respond to whatever life throws at us. Our attitude affects not only ourselves, but also everyone around us. Knowing we can choose our attitude helps us build the relationships we want.

Leaders have spirit and enthusiasm is contagious. Catch it!

## Leaders Have Imagination



Being an effective leader requires immense imagination. As leaders we must envision the person who is not yet there; the situation that has not arrived; the community that is to be formed.

As leaders we must imagine the human potential, and this is no small or easy task. We have to have vision and curiosity. We have to empower others to use their imaginations and find their

way in the world to live a life that only they can imagine. We have to imagine and believe that what we do is making a difference.

A story in *The Oregonian* about the founders of Sseko Designs highlights the imagination of leadership. Liz Forkin Bohannon, not long out of college, decided to do a four-month trip to Uganda, to see what she could see. What she found through some volunteer work were college bound girls unable to go to college due to not having the \$5,000 a year to pay for tuition, and not having a way to earn the money. The opportunities were not there. Unimagined human potential being wasted.

Bohannon, not married at the time, thought that starting a charity might help. But a Ugandan friend suggested that finding the students work—helping them to help themselves—would be the way to go.

An idea of making a flip-flop type of sandal appeared along with three students who were struggling to raise college tuition. Bohannon made a commitment to the students that if they worked on this sandal-making project, she would guarantee the nearly \$15,000 they needed for college.

The three students and Bohannon, now married with her husband on-board with the challenge, made and sold enough sandals for the three to go off to college in 2009.

In 2011, Sseko Designs sold over 10,000 pair of Ugandan made shoes, with 10 students working their way to college. In 2018, Sseko will send their 106<sup>th</sup> woman to attend university.

Liz and Ben Bohannon with their imagination of leadership envisioned college graduates who could work their way to college and enrich their lives and communities with their experiences.

Leaders need imagination as they innovate, grow, listen, and respond with enthusiasm to the needs of the people around them.

Our challenge as parents, teachers and other adults is to see in a child an adult who is not yet there, to see an opportunity waiting to be discovered, and to envision a world we all will be making together.

## Leaders Take Risks



Our initial responsibility as leaders, no matter what field we are in, is to first do no harm. If we are going to be problem solvers and remove obstacles to a child's development, we

have to take risks. Change always involves the danger that what we do may not work, but change also creates the opportunity that our modifications may work better than we imagined. Our risk taking is calculated so that we give up something good to get something better.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes of a leader become critical as we endeavor to make changes. Have we listened carefully to those around us to truly understand needs and requests? Do we have the ability to respond to those needs? Can we take the responsibility? Can we bring enthusiasm and passion to our tasks? Do we have a clear vision in order to empower others to see their worth and potential?

We have three basic ways to effect change:

- Change our attitude about a situation.
- Change the rules that govern the situation.
- Change the environment.

**Change our attitude.** Martin and Lela were frustrated that their four-year-old, Olivia, would not settle down for a 7:30 bedtime. Until after 9:30 every evening Olivia was up for a drink of water, jumping on the bed, surfing down the stairs on her stomach, and various other non-sleeping activities.

Using a leadership idea of "ask more, talk less", Martin and Lela decided to ask Olivia why she couldn't get to sleep and how they might help her.

Much to their surprise, Olivia suggested that they take a walk after dinner every night so Olivia could exercise. A thirty-minute walk around the neighborhood with flashlights in the cold seemed to be the antidote for their sleeping pill.

Martin and Lela changed their attitude about what bedtime should look like. Risking what might happen if they let Olivia set the routine, created a situation that was a win/win. Olivia got tired enough to go to sleep. Lela and Martin got some exercise and energy for rest of their evening.

**Change the rules.** Pam and Pat, dealing with much the same situation with their four-year-old, Logan, took another tack. After getting input from Logan, they decided to change his bedtime routine. Logan could turn off his new bedside lamp with the clap of his hands, empowering him to have more control over when he went to sleep.

After a nighttime routine of brush teeth, pajamas, story and prayers, Logan agreed to not get up from bed, but would read and listen to music until he was ready to sleep.

Working with Logan to find a solution to bedtime problems, created new expectations. A clap of the hands changed bedtime for the better.

***Change the environment.*** Jeff and Julie were getting more ragged every day as their sleep was disrupted by their daughter, Morgan's, 2 am visits.

Tucking Morgan into her own bed didn't help her get back to sleep. Nobody got any sleep if Morgan got into bed with Jeff and Julie.

In a parenting magazine, Julie came across the idea of putting a sleeping bag at the foot of their bed for Morgan. Morgan agreed to the idea of using the sleeping bag if she got up in the middle of the night.

After a few more days of investigations, Jeff discovered that the air conditioner came on around 2 am each morning and blew cold air on a coverless Morgan. Moving Morgan's bed and changing the thermostat to come on at a later time fixed Morgan nocturnal roaming.

Leadership requires that we take risks by changing our attitude, changing our rules, and changing our environment to help make life better for those around us—ourselves included.

## Leaders Are Committed



Peter Drucker, one of the great management minds of our time, wrote that with a few hundred years perspective, historians may view our time as one of "unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first

time—literally—substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it."

As leaders we need a commitment to help others learn to lead and manage themselves. Your leadership is vital because, as Drucker stated, we are totally unprepared for the changes we are experiencing today.

The best way to get people to learn is to turn them into teachers. As a teacher, I know I truly begin to master material as I ready myself to teach it to others. As leaders, we have to teach others what we learn, and we have to systematically apply what we learn to be able to do it, and then teach some more.

As in the old saying, "Do as I say, not as I do," most of us know what to do, but we don't heed our advice. To know something and not do it, is really not knowing in the final analysis. We can't sit on the couch and

quarterback. We have to do. Effective leadership requires that we walk our talk. With a commitment to developing knowledge, skills and attitudes we create a habit of leadership, one of walking our talk, one of knowing, and of doing.

Commitment builds on the foundation of understanding our mission and values. Effective leaders know where they are headed and why. In order to assure success, leaders' goals and objectives align with their mission and values. Weekly activities are planned by focusing on mission and values, along with goals and objectives. Our leadership compass of mission, values, goals, objectives and weekly plans should inform our daily activities. Leading with commitment and clarity makes saying "no" to an activity that doesn't match our leadership compass easy. Or at least easier.

### **What does a leadership compass look like for a parent leader?**

The combinations will be as varied as the number of people on this planet, but some common themes emerge:

- Commitment to problem solving within a family and marriage.
- Commitment to helping each family member uncover and pursue their interests and potential with the resources available.
- Commitment to personal values of that may include respect for the individual, kindness, compassion, self-regulation, forgiveness, gratitude, appreciation of beauty and excellence, creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, courage, fairness and more.

Our challenge is to empower the whole person to do the whole job of self-leadership and management. As we work with our children, this empowerment takes years to build with knowledge, skills and attitudes—work that we must commit to following through.

We can tell our children to make their beds. But we must make our own in a cheerful manner. We have to show our children how to make a bed, not once but seven times seven with an attitude of respect and dignity. Our job is to raise adults, not children, and that is the reason we commit as parent leaders.

## Leaders Lead



Effective leaders empower the whole person to do the whole job of self-leadership and management.

Epictetus said it well over two thousand years ago, "No man is free who is not master of himself."

In order to help others help themselves, we have to engage their minds, bodies, heart and spirits. We must include them in the planning stages, the actual activity, and the

evaluation process, thus creating a continuous loop of feedback, self-correction and empowerment. Engaging the whole person to do his or her best thinking, work, and analysis produces an attitude of the heart, an attitude of service to help others. This attitude of service in turn inspires leadership in others.

For me, this school motto says it all:

*Learn to live, live to love, love to learn.*

This expression seems to sum up our job as leaders. If we can help others learn how to live—have the knowledge, skills, and attitude for success, they will develop a love and appreciation that they will want to share. As they share their knowledge, skills and attitude they will take that love to

increase their learning to continue and enlarge a cycle of success, from generation to generation.

**Learn to live.** Albert Einstein made a comment about learning and leadership, “I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” When we provide the conditions for learning—planning a place where growth is encouraged, be it home, school or business—we should allow choice of activity within limits of responsibility.

For example for a three-year-old, perhaps we offer three tasks that need completed before bedtime. The order of completion is not important, and timing is not critical. For example, take a bath, brush your teeth, put away your things. Until a child has the knowledge and skills to do those tasks, plus enthusiasm to the activities, the limit of responsibility falls to us as the adults in charge.

As the child learns to do those tasks then we enlarge the limits so they become responsible to manage the tasks and have a system of evaluation that the tasks were done according to agreed upon standards. Yes, even a three-year old knows when they've done those tasks well, or not at all. And they also have ideas how they can do it better.

**Live to love.** Kahlil Gibran wrote, “Work is love made visible.”

As we do our daily activities with a confidence built on knowledge, skills and attitude, we love what we do, and we love to help others. As leaders, when we find ways to help others develop their independence and ability to follow through (concentration), our love is made visible, with an

added bonus that the other person's love is made visible through work they, in turn, love.

**Love to learn.** Isaac Asimov said, "I guess the essence of life for me is finding something you enjoy that gives meaning to life, and then being in a situation where you can do it."

Asimov's statement underlies this theme of learning to do something well enough in order to enjoy it, sharing it with others to give meaning to life, and finding opportunities to learn and grow more proficient in the process. Learn to live, live to love, love to learn.

When we practice a process of using our minds to plan and choose our activities, our bodies to work and follow through with our ideas and commitments, our hearts to evaluate and elevate our work, and our spirits to serve others, we learn to lead and leave a legacy...of leaders. Leaders lead.

**Lead on!**

## Lead or Manage?



As parents and teachers we lead and manage our children. If we lead without adequate management skills, logistical problems arise. If we manage without providing clear leadership, we may travel a long road to nowhere.

Leadership focuses on developing people, empowerment, doing the right

things, direction and principles.

Management, on the other hand, concerns itself with taking care of things, control, doing things right, speed and practices.

If we are leading in the wrong direction, does it matter how well managed the journey is?

Conversely, when our leadership can't manage to do things right, control outcomes and practices with a modicum of speed and sense of delivery, is our leadership effective?

Leading is an art. Managing is more about skills and organization. Parenting and teaching requires the delicate balance of knowing when to guide and when to supervise.

Paul was a time management guru and didn't go anywhere or do anything without consulting his Daily Planner. For Paul, it came naturally to schedule time everyday to develop new skills. Fitness training was inked in from 5 to 6 am everyday while Paul listened to tapes to learn French. Dinner was from 6 to 6:30 pm. After dinner, every 15 minutes in the Daily Planner included activities for Paul to oversee with his children. Piano practice, read books, yoga exercises, bath time, tooth brushing, and prayers. Paul scheduled every minute of his day. Paul planned his wife's activities. Paul's children's events were in the book. By golly, Paul said, in his family they got things done. The Daily Planner organized everything.

As Paul's children began to enter into the independent stage of the older child, around age six years, small actions of rebellion and deception began to appear in the children's behavior. Dawdling at the dinner table in order to miss piano practice. Going to get a drink of water in the kitchen when it was time to brush teeth. Hiding the reading books. The children's passive acts of rebellion sabotaged Paul's Daily Planner.

Paul made the mistake of managing his children when they needed his leadership for vision, moral direction, and personal development. For Paul the balance of leadership and management tipped completely towards taking care of the schedule, controlling time and practices, and being efficient.

When we become overly concerned with controlling things and people, instead of empowering others to manage and control themselves, we may find ourselves surrounded by indications of low trust. Some of

these symptoms, but by no means all, are escapism, anger, fear, chaos, infighting, back-biting, hidden agendas, withholding of information, poor-me attitudes, and people saying one thing and doing another.

To effectively manage we must lead. To lead we must effectively manage. So the dance begins.

Our job as parents and teachers is to have a clear direction on how we are going to help our children learn to lead and manage themselves, so that later they may in turn, lead and manage others.

Otherwise, we may end up in a place we never intended, using a map to obscurity, but running right on time.

## About Maren Schmidt, M. Ed.



With Maren's Kids Talk newsletters and workshops you'll find tools to use immediately to strengthen your relationships with children.

In her *Kids Talk Newsletters and Workshops*, Maren offers you practical, put-it-into-action advice and insight about children.

You'll discover time-tested techniques based on proven child development principles that you can start using right away!

If children could verbalize what they need from the adults in their lives, the information in Maren's newsletters, workshops and books is what our children would want us to know.

Working with children may be the most important adult role we'll ever have.

*Kids Talk Newsletters and Workshops* help you create adult-child relationships that are joyful, satisfying and productive for a life-time.

Sign up at [MarenSchmidt.com](https://MarenSchmidt.com) to get time-tested tips to start using today to create loving relationships.