

Leadership Rules

“A leader is best when people barely know he exists. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: We did it ourselves.”

—Sun Tzu

Leadership is hard. Too many people confuse it with authority and power. And too many in positions of authority are not good leaders. A good leader doesn't need authority to lead.

I compiled the following list over a period of years. They have come from everywhere ... Sun Tzu, Reader's Digest, leaders I have followed, and my own experience.

Most of these are unordered, but #1 is definitely first to me as a leader, teacher, and parent. Note that this list can never be complete.

1. If you don't care about them, they won't care what you say
2. They won't do more than you do
3. A leader is not powerful, but responsible
4. A true leader works for all he or she leads, not the other way around
5. Don't take success to your head or failure to your heart
6. To be a good leader, you must first learn to follow
7. A leader is proactive, a follower is reactive
8. If you are a leader, their time is more valuable than yours
9. Only throw temper tantrums on purpose
10. Get to the point!
11. Tell the truth, especially if the news is bad
12. Don't apologize for doing the right thing
13. Always apologize for doing the wrong thing
14. Say thank you
15. If you don't know the answer, know who does
16. Leadership is service
17. Good leaders are good under pressure
18. A leader has to be trusted
19. Seek first to understand, then be understood
20. Complainers think about the past, followers the present, leaders the future

“Try not to become a person of success but rather to become a person of value.” —Einstein

“Be the chief but never the lord.” —Sun Tzu