



Association for  
Talent Development

For the HR/OD Professional – BLOG 1

## So You Think You Can Lead

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Part 1 of My Leadership Blog Series

“Hard experience has taught me that real leadership is about understanding you first, and then using that to create a superb organization” said Captain D. Michael Abrashoff in his book called, [It's Your Ship](#).

What makes you think you can lead? You probably know how to plan, budget, and establish detailed steps and timetables. Allocating resources is no problem for you. Your employees already have a copy of the company policies and procedures.

So you think you can lead?

Growing up, my Father would say to me “leading is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.” Some of you may lead your departments like Alice did her trip through “Wonderland.” She kept managing her wandering around. Here’s my point: lead with a vision for the future, lead with specific direction, lead with influence, lead with motivation and inspiration, energizing your followers. You need two things in order to lead: followers and somewhere to take your followers.

Abrashoff says, "leadership is about understanding you first." Ok, timeout. Assume you are being asked by your followers to give evidence of your leadership. Describe your leadership on a piece of paper by answering these questions:

1. Do you accept responsibilities beyond the call of duty?
2. Do you like everything kept factual, clearly stated and not too complex?
3. Do you look for principles to explain things?
4. Are you more impersonal, then analytical?
5. Do you rely more on your feelings than logic?
6. Do you concern yourself chiefly with the people around you?
7. Do you look for rules to explain things?
8. Do you prefer working alone?
9. Do you prefer linear thinking as opposed to global?
10. Do you enjoy reading more than listening?

Now, share your description with your followers. Add more questions to your description and build on yourself, as needed. The art of understanding yourself is the skill of being able to lead your followers to achieve a common goal. "However, most obstacles that limit *people's potential are set in motion by the leader and* are rooted in his or her own fears, ego needs, and unproductive habits. When leaders explore deep within their thoughts and feelings in order to understand themselves, a transformation can take place," said Captain D. Abrashoff in his book called It's Your Ship.

Sharing decision making, control and responsibilities is transformation leadership moving you from managing to engaging.

So you think you can lead? I know you can because you are ready to put more of an emphasis on developing goals with your employees. You see your role as a vision setter, an educator, a change agent empowering people. Here are some core characteristics of a leader:

- They are honest.
- They help others with growth and development.
- They are forward looking.
- They want to be held accountable.
- They want to serve.

I will conclude my blog with a description of my Mentor. His leadership was charismatic; whereby, he led his followers with a desirable goal and offered them reasons to reach the goal. He appointed other leaders under him to deal with judicial responsibilities, allowing his followers to be led. He had exceptional administrative leadership style in that he was able to convince his followers to leave Egypt to go the Promised Land. He was able to make the vision of the Promised Land real to his followers. There were problems along the way, no doubt about that. Remember how Winston Churchill as Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War Two, was unwilling to accept defeat. So was Moses. He led with understanding his courage and fortitude.

So you think you can lead?

## Author

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