



How to Distinguish Between Good Leaders and Great Leaders



by

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What is the primary difference between a good leader and a great leader? The answer is simple, whether you're simply a good leader or a great, influential leader depends on your motive. If your main objective is to inspire and mentor individuals for their own benefit, you're filling the role of a "great leader" or a social leader. However, if you're mentoring individuals primarily for the benefit of a business or organization, you're filling the role of a "good leader" or an instrumental leader.



Truly great leaders aren't motivated by power, prestige or status. Instead great leaders are motivated by causes which they believe in. Great leaders, simply wish to make a profound impact on the world, for the good of others. Examples of great world leaders who have left their mark on the world include Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Theresa.

These brave individuals created a better world by ensuring the freedom of the oppressed and underprivileged and championing human rights in their own countries.

What type of leader will you be?

If you're uncertain about the type of leader that you're striving to become, you're not alone! Most individuals in a leadership position question which type of leader they ultimately aspire to be, on a daily basis.

The ultimate leadership test:

Quickly think about a leader or a mentor who has had a profound influence on your life. This leader may be a teacher, a sports coach, a friend's parent, a colleague or a church leader. Once you've chosen a leader, ask yourself why you admire them. It's highly likely that you one of the major reasons that you admire your chosen leader is that they helped you grow and to become a better person. It's also likely that your chosen leader inspired you, for your sake, not for a business's sake. A leader who inspires people for their own good, is definitely a great social leader.

Unfortunately, most businesses and organizations are set up to promote instrumental leaders. Leaders who care little about each individual's personal aspirations and who are rigidly focused on training an individual to excel for the sake of the company or organization, whom they're working for.

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Are instrumental leaders necessary?

Whilst in an ideal world the world wouldn't need instrumental leaders, there are a wide variety of circumstances which require instrumental style leadership over social leadership. As examples, both the armed forces and certain government departments rely heavily on instrumental leaders and for good reason!

However, even in such circumstances instrumental leaders do need to ensure that they don't discourage individuals from following their aspirations or fulfilling their individual potential.

How to recognize your natural leadership style:

In the short term it can be extremely difficult to decipher whether or not you've been acting as a social leader or an instrumental leader. Especially if you've been acting as a mentor in a professional, business environment. However, if you look at your leadership patterns after a few months, you should be able to ascertain whether you're naturally a social leader or an instrumental leader.

How to tell if you're an instrumental style leader:

- If your relationship with those you mentor only lasts as long as your business contract or relationship, it's highly likely that you're an instrumental style leader.
- If those you're tasked with mentoring have not grown on a personal level, it's also highly likely that you're an instrumental style leader.

Why are social leaders great leaders?

Social leaders aren't "soft" leaders as the term social leaders may signify. In fact, social leaders tend to be very driven, self aware individuals. Social leaders understand the unique dynamics of leadership and are committed to assisting others to grow as individuals.

Social leaders understand that whilst the support and mentorship they offer may lead to individuals leaving the company, in order to pursue their dreams, that society as a whole will be better off for having passionate individuals maximizing their potential. However, they also realize that if those they inspire grow as individuals, their productivity will increase for the time that they choose to stay on with the company. Which leads to a win for the individual and a win for the company.



How to tell if you're a social leader:

- If the relationships which you form with those you mentor lasts, even when they leave the company, you're most likely a great social leader.
- If those you mentor feel connected to you on a personal level and know that you'd go beyond the call of duty to assist them, you're likely to be a social leader.
- If those you mentor are passionate about achieving organizational goals and take pride and joy in doing so, you're also likely to be a natural social leader.
- If those you mentor increase their productivity both for the company and in their personal lives, it's likely that you're born to be an effective social leader.



Getting the balance right:

Some individuals may argue that the business or organization should benefit rewards from a mentor, mentee relationship first, as they are technically footing the bill for such a mentorship. However, others will make the argument that a business or organization also have a responsibility to both their employees and their wellbeing and society as a whole.

The truth is that businesses can only gain by inspiring social leaders to mentor their employees. If employers look at the bigger picture they'll realize that if their employees are personally transformed as the result of a mentorship, they'll be far more likely to help increase the company's bottom line. After all happy, inspired employees are guaranteed to work more productively than employees who feel like they're just another number.

So if you get the feeling that you're a social leader, there's no way that you can lose by being a social leader within an organization or a business.

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Conclusion:

Whilst some of the influential leaders that you've crossed paths with may be instrumental leaders, most of these individuals could have been great social leaders.

It is likely that many influential leaders were taught to be social leaders and therefore have established that pattern of leadership.

Personally, I couldn't be happier that my patterns reflect those of a social leader. After all, I would rather be in the company of great social leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, than to simply mentor individuals for an organization's bottom line.

So what are you waiting for? Are you ready to bring around long term change by inspiring individuals on a personal level?

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