

Once Upon a Leader

My Trip to Legendary Leadership

Activities Book for Continuous Learning

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Why This Book Is Important

You have completed the program, *Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*. In the tales, the Prince took a trip during which he discovered important qualities of leadership:

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximize Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focus on the Goal

At first, the Prince was obstinate and unwilling to learn what it takes to be an effective and admired leader of his kingdom. He now sees the importance of leadership competencies. He also knows that one trip is not enough to keep the qualities alive in daily practice.

The Prince realizes that he must commit himself to continuous learning about becoming an extraordinary leader. He knows that if he meets that commitment, he will continue to promote the welfare of people in his kingdom. AND, he will continuously maintain a distinct advantage over Count DuProfit, who believes that people in the kingdom are lazy and stupid and, therefore, deserve a ruler, not a leader.

As a leader in your professional and personal kingdoms, you also know that one leadership seminar, workshop, or program is not enough to keep your leadership competencies alive. There is a lot to learn about leadership, a lot of ground to cover, and therefore, a need for your continuous attention and commitment. You may recall the Queen's advice to Alice in Wonderland—advice that suggests the pace you must maintain in your trip to legendary leadership.

It takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!

You may feel that you're already exhausted running with all the responsibilities you have at work and at home—and that you do not have the time, energy, or commitment to run any faster.

This book suggests that running fast does not require a lot of time or energy. But, it does suggest that you commit to continuous improvement.

As you will see in the next section, "How to Use This Book," continuous improvement requires commitment, but relatively little time—only once a week.

How to Use This Book

Alice asked the Mock Turtle, “And how many hours a day did you do lessons?”

“Ten hours the first day,” said the Mock Turtle, “nine the next, and so on.”

“What a curious plan!” exclaimed Alice.

“That’s the reason they’re called lessons,” the Gryphon remarked, “because they lessen from day to day.”

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

The lessons in this book are not a curious plan. There are no 10 or 9-hour lessons each day. In fact, there is only one lesson a week—and each lesson requires only a few minutes of your time!

There are 52 lessons in the book to carry you through a year. The lessons offer variety to keep your interest, yet broaden your focus and sharpen your leadership competencies. Topics of the lessons are:

- A Pre Assessment of your leadership qualities to begin your trip
- Improving your leadership qualities
- Profiles of exemplary leaders
- Reflections on leadership
- Fables with morals for leaders
- Applying leadership qualities to workplace scenarios
- Quotations about leadership
- A Post Assessment of your leadership competencies to end this trip—but not the end of your efforts to be an extraordinary leader
- Next Steps

Suggestions for using this book:

- Take time—at least once a week—to increase your knowledge about leadership and what it takes to be an extraordinary leader.
- Place the book where it will be visible and easily accessible.
- Consider doing each lesson on Monday of your workweek—to focus your thinking for the rest of the week.
- Complete each lesson at a time of the day when you are most alert and energetic: first thing in the morning, during lunch, or at the end of your workday.

If you are faithful in your commitment to the lessons, everyone in your kingdom will enjoy your leadership, and everyone will live happily ever after.

Lesson 1 – Pre Assessment

Begin your trip with an assessment of your leadership qualities. At the end of your trip, you will take a post assessment to learn if you believe that you have improved your skills.

For each statement below, circle the number that reflects the level of your knowledge and/or skills regarding “leadership.” Remember! There is not a secret document that has the “right” answers. The “right” answer is what you believe your knowledge and skills are:

I am able to identify and describe the four qualities of leaders as demonstrated in *Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I am aware of both strengths and weaknesses concerning my leadership qualities.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I am able to demonstrate and effectively apply leadership qualities in workplace situations.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I have the respect and credibility of others for my leadership qualities.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I am currently following a leadership development plan based on clearly defined and actionable steps.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

Lesson 2 – Improving Your Leadership Qualities

“Truth and Integrity” is one of the leadership qualities demonstrated in *Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*.

What are a few behaviors or characteristics that would demonstrate that you model truth and integrity in all your actions as a leader?

Possible answers: you follow through on promises and commitments, you lead by example, you work hard to gain the trust and respect of coworkers, you are honest and ethical when dealing with others.

Lesson 3 – Profile of a Leader: James Burke

In 1982, cyanide in a number of Tylenol capsules killed seven people. The media jumped on the story, and people feared poison in their medicine cabinets. James Burke, Chairman of Johnson & Johnson, immediately defined the crisis as an issue of public health, not of corporate profits, and withdrew all Tylenol from the market—costing Johnson & Johnson millions of dollars. Johnson & Johnson then quickly introduced triple-seal packing for Tylenol, and the industry soon followed its example. Today, Tylenol is one of the most trusted and popular medicines on the market.

Select the leadership qualities that Burke demonstrated.

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximize Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focus on the Goal

What is the message for you and other leaders? *Please reflect on your answer before you look at possible messages offered below.*

Possible messages: Integrity is a sound business practice. Truthfulness wins the trust of people.

Lesson 4 – Reflection on Leadership

In Lesson 3, you read a profile of James Burke, then Chairman of Johnson & Johnson. Leadership, however, is not limited to high profile and heroic people who transform major companies or champion crusades to improve society.

In reality, many leaders are people who work impressively, but often inconspicuously to make workplaces and the world better. When you think of “leaders,” therefore, think of people you admire for their leadership qualities. They can be people such as work colleagues, managers, spouses, children, parents, and friends. Everyone can be a leader because “leadership” is best defined by what people *do*, not by his or her position or role in life.

In column A are the four qualities of effective leaders. In column B, write the names of people you believe are excellent models of each quality and the specific actions that demonstrate their leadership abilities. In column C, make notes about what you can do to “be like them.”

A: Leadership Qualities	B: “Leaders” You Admire	C: What you can do to “be like them”
Truth and Integrity		
Maximize Diversity		
Vision and Foresight		
Focus on the Goal		

Lesson 5 – Aesop Fable With a Moral for Leaders

Tales and fables were not originally intended for children. They were used to present lessons on ethical behavior, to enhance understanding of a topic through the use of stories, or to explain natural phenomena prior to scientific discoveries.

The effectiveness of tales and fables is in their simplicity. They cut through the detail and make the point in an entertaining manner. The fable below makes a point about leaders and leadership.

Read the fable. Before you look at the moral and possible messages at the bottom of the page, reflect on what you believe the moral is and the message of the fable for leaders.

The Bundle of Sticks

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the bundle," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.

What do you believe is the moral of the fable?

Which leadership quality/qualities are demonstrated in the fable?

What is a message of the fable for leaders?

Moral: Union gives strength.

Leadership Qualities: Maximize Diversity

Possible Message for Leaders: Leaders who capitalize on the diverse strengths of individuals help to build unbreakable organizations.

Lesson 6 – Applying Leadership Qualities to a Workplace Scenario

Suppose you are faced with the challenge below.

Your team is beginning to test all your competencies as the team leader. The team has responsibility for a project that would increase the product line and bring much needed revenue into the organization.

The project, however, is falling more and more behind schedule. Tomorrow's meeting, therefore, is extremely important to get team members back on track and get things moving forward at a quicker pace.

In past meetings, team members have either not met their agreed-upon action steps, or have provided inaccurate information. For example, Michael agreed to get data on similar products of competitors. But, he always seems to have an excuse about how difficult it is to get reliable data. You have heard sighs and seen other signs of frustration from team members. Another example is that in past meetings, Melissa presented financial projections for the project that were seriously challenged by other team members as far too low. Team members, therefore, were losing confidence in Melissa's abilities.

Which leadership qualities would be appropriate for you to use to address the situation? Select the appropriate qualities and reflect upon the reasons for your selection(s) before looking at possible answers at the bottom of the page.

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximize Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focus on the Goal

Possible answers: Actually, using any one or more of the competencies might be appropriate. The key to your answers is your reason for using one or more of the qualities.

Lesson 7 – Quotations About Leadership

People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy after.
—Goldsmith

The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.
—Fred A. Manske, Jr.

These two quotations have a common message. Select the quality that you believe relates to the message of both quotations.

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximize Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focus on the Goal

Possible answer: Maximize Diversity—a great leader does not think of herself/himself as an island of knowledge, control, and power. A great leader knows that real power is in the collective knowledge and wisdom of many people.

Lesson 50 – Decisions, Decisions!

You have completed 49 lessons. Do you still want to be a “leader”? Your answer to the question involves at least two preliminary decisions:

1. A decision to be dedicated to the task and willing to act on it with intensity and focus.
2. A decision to be great rather than just mediocre.

Writing your thoughts and ideas brings clarity. When you “see” your thoughts and ideas on a page, you can focus your full attention on them, study them, expand on them, edit them, and organize them. Otherwise they rattle around in your head almost haphazardly and become jumbled with a host of unrelated thoughts and ideas. Moreover, you may not remember some of those “great thoughts” and “fantastic ideas” you had! So, write your responses to the questions below:

Why do you want to become a great leader?

Is the goal important enough to you to be worthy of your continued effort?

What is in it for you?

What is in it for your organization?

Lesson 51 – Post Assessment

You began your trip to legendary leadership with a pre assessment of your leadership qualities. After 50 “lessons,” it is time to check if you believe the lessons have helped you improve. When you have completed the Post Assessment, compare the results with those of the Pre Assessment. The comparison may help you determine what you want to do in Lesson 52, “Next Steps.”

For each statement below, circle the number that reflects the level of your knowledge and/or skills regarding “leadership.” Remember! There is not a secret document that has the “right” answers. The “right” answer is what you believe your knowledge and skills are:

I am able to identify and describe the four qualities of leaders as demonstrated in *Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I am aware of both strengths and weaknesses concerning my leadership qualities.

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I am able to demonstrate and effectively apply leadership qualities in workplace situations.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I have the respect and credibility of others for my leadership qualities.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

I am currently following a leadership development plan based on clearly defined and actionable steps.

High 4 3 2 1 Low

Lesson 52 – Next Steps

You're done! Well, you're done with the lessons in this book, that is.

When it comes to being an extraordinary leader, you will never be done because there will always be something new to know, a new skill to develop, or a current skill to sharpen.

You may recall the Queen's advice to Alice in Wonderland—advice that suggests that you can never stop running toward your goal to be a great leader.

It takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!

If you feel that you have been running as fast as you can for the past 52 weeks, remember that you will have to run even faster to remain an extraordinary leader. It's like maintaining any skill, such as athletic, technological, or knowledge skills. If you don't keep practicing them, you begin to lose the sharpness you had developed.

There is a popular belief that once you have learned how to ride a bike, you never forget. Perhaps in your efforts “to get” or “to keep” in shape, you have just begun to ride a bike again after many years. Are you a bit shaky? Less confident? A bit concerned about falling off? Having trouble mastering ten or more speeds? A little quick with the brake?

Leadership is like riding a bike: it's easy to fall off if we don't practice the skills continuously. A few suggestions to keep your leadership skills alive and growing are:

- Read books and articles about leadership.
- Enroll in a leadership development seminar, workshop, or program.
- Volunteer for challenging leadership situations in your organization.

What suggestions can you add to the list?

The lessons conclude with another quotation from a leader.

“Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people (leaders) who want to feel important...they do not mean to do harm...they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.”

—T.S. Eliot

Great leaders are those whom others think well of—perhaps because great leaders are not focused on their egos. Instead, they focus on Truth and Integrity, Maximizing Diversity, Vision and Foresight, and Focusing on the Goal in every endeavor.