



PERSONAL VILLAGE



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Choosing A Great Leader

The role of leadership belongs to each of us. We each have responsibility to nudge and direct the happenings in our daily lives. This role may be an informal one that occurs at home, on the job, in our volunteer work, or in our personal communities.

Formal leadership usually falls to a few individuals who are designated to direct a collective effort. We each also have a responsibility to the collective when it comes to selecting those individuals. As 2008 is a presidential election year in the United States, the responsibility of choosing our nation's leader is on all of our minds.

A leader is interpreted as someone who sets direction and influences people to follow that direction. How a person sets that direction and influences people is determined by their character, their experience, their intentions, and their vision. Because a leader has the ability to either enrich or damage the communal good, leadership is a sacred trust. How do we decide who should hold that sacred trust?

The first step in making this important decision is to define what we most value in a leader. Asking the following questions can help you identify effective leadership qualities in a person:

1. Do they inspire trust? A leader builds trust through his or her character and competence and extends trust to others.
2. Do they communicate a clear purpose? Great leaders involve their people in the communication process to create the goals to be achieved.
3. Can they create and maintain stability by aligning the systems and structures within the organization or government?
4. Do they recognize and value the talent of others? Great leaders empower people to unleash their own talent so that their capacity, their intelligence, their creativity, and their resourcefulness can be utilized.

***adapted from Stephen R. Covey's article "The Leader Formula"*

Take a moment to make a list of the qualities that you admire most in a leader, as well as the traits you like least. Consider both positive and negative as you evaluate the leaders in your life. Are they qualified to hold the sacred trust?

Next Month: Are you a leader? Next month we'll discuss how to identify and nurture strong leadership qualities in ourselves.

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