

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak  
COLUMNIST ([www.AdviceChief.com](http://www.AdviceChief.com))

I’ve had the opportunity to lead in many different situations. Along that leadership path, I’ve made many mistakes that thankfully, didn’t do me in. I was very fortunate to overcome some of my failures by paying attention to and learning from my blunders. At times I was sprinkled with consequences and had to pay a personal price before I could saddle up again, and other times I escaped unscathed.

As I grew as a leader I spent much time learning from Napoleon Hill, a man who spent 20-plus consecutive years researching and interviewing over 500 of the world’s richest and successful people to learn about and reveal the secrets of obtaining wealth and success. In his book *Think and Grow Rich* published in 1937, he revealed the 10 major causes of failure in leadership that remain very valid in this day and age (and probably forever). Napoleon Hill was emphatic that it was just as essential to know “what not to do” as it was to know “what to do.” Here are the causes of failure he unveiled:

1. *Inability to organize details.* Efficient leadership calls for ability to organize and to master details. No genuine leader is ever “too busy” to do anything which may be required as a leader. When a leader or follower is “too busy” to change plans or give attention to any emergency, it is an indication of inefficiency. The successful leader must be the master of all details connected with the position. That includes the habit of delegating details to a capable subordinate when necessary or feasible.

2. *Unwillingness to render humble service.* Truly great leaders are willing, when occasion demands, to perform any sort of labor that they would ask another to perform.

3. *Expectation of pay for what they “know” instead of what they do with what they know.* The world does not pay for what people “know.” It pays them for what they “do,” or induce others “to do.”

4. *Fear of competition from their followers.* The leader who fears that one of his followers may take his position is practically sure to realize that fear sooner or later. Able leaders train understudies to whom they may delegate at will. Only in this way may leaders multiply themselves and prepare to be at many places, and give attention to many things, at one time. It is an eternal truth that people receive more pay for their ability to get others to perform than they could possibly earn by their own efforts. Efficient leaders may, through knowledge of their jobs and the magnetism of the personalities, greatly increase the efficiency of others, inducing them to render more service and better service than what could have been provided by a single person.

5. *Lack of imagination.* Without imagination, leaders are incapable of meeting emergencies, and of creating plans by which to guide followers efficiently.

6. *Selfishness.* Leaders who claim all the honor for the work of their followers are sure to be met by resentment. Really great leaders claim none of the honors. They are content to see the honors go to their followers because they know

that most people will work harder for commendation and recognition than they will for money alone.

7. *Intemperance.* Followers do not respect an intemperate leader. Moreover, intemperance in any of its various forms destroys the endurance and the vitality of all who indulge in it.

8. *Disloyalty.* Leaders who are not loyal to their associates--those above and below them--cannot long maintain their leadership. Disloyalty marks people as being less than the dust of the earth, and brings down on their head the contempt they deserve.

9. *Emphasis of the “authority” of leadership.* Efficient leaders lead by encouraging, not by trying to instill fear in the hearts of their followers. Leaders who try to impress followers with their “authority” come within the category of leadership through force. Real leaders have no need to advertise that fact except by their conduct, sympathy, understanding, fairness, and a demonstration of their competence.

10. *Emphasis of title.* Competent leaders require no “title” to gain the respect of their followers. Leaders who make too much of their title generally have little else to emphasize. Leaders who constantly remind followers about their title and authority do so out of a sense of insecurity.

So if you’re aspiring to be an effective leader, study these 10 causes of failure in leadership. Any one of them is sufficient to bring a leader down. Do your best to be free of these faults.

~ The End ~