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Leadership can be an assuming thing (and complicated!). Many people think they can be a leader simply because they were put in charge. Yet then they wonder why very few people cooperate with them unless the authority stick is waved. Then there are others who have little-to-no authority yet are able to influence people to act or think a certain way. Which group of people are the real leaders?

Effective leaders are rare. And not all effective leaders are good people with good causes. There can be ineffective leaders who try to do good things and effective leaders who seek to proliferate evil. A director for a hospital may be entrusted with an important mission but may be ineffective in motivating and guiding people in accomplishing key objectives. A leader of a rogue nation may create an evil strategy designed to harm or needlessly kill innocent people and be real effective in rallying support to carry it out.

In most instances people want to follow leaders who do good things and who inspire them without intimidating them. We know bad leaders exist and we certainly can't turn a blind eye to

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them, but it's the good leaders who will prevail over the long-term in most instances.

So you think you can lead? Do you have what it takes to inspire and influence others to support your cause and carry out your orders? Answer the following questions and see where you stand:

- Do you use your influence at the right times for the right reasons?
- Do you take greater share of the blame and smaller share of the credit?
- Do you lead yourself successfully before attempting to lead others?
- Do you search for the best answers and not the familiar ones?
- Do you add value to the people and the organization you lead?
- Do you work for the benefit of others and not for personal gain?
- Do you handle yourself with your head and handle others with your heart?
- Do you know the way, go the way, and show the way?
- Do you inspire and motivate rather than intimidate and manipulate?
- Do realize your disposition is more important than your position?
- Do you mold opinions instead of following opinion polls?
- Do you never place yourself above

others except in carrying responsibilities?

- Are you honest in small things as in big things?
- Do discipline yourself so you will not be disciplined by others?
- Do you encounter setbacks and turn them into comebacks?
- Do you follow a moral compass that points in the right direction regardless of trends?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are probably an effective leader or have great potential to be one. If you answered no to any of them, you must reflect on why you answered no and devise a strategy to reverse your answer(s).

Now here's the hard part: Also have a trusted colleague answer these questions about you and see if their answers match yours. This will give you an added perspective and possibly shed light on something you didn't realize about yourself.

No one is perfect so don't be alarmed if you or they answered no to some of the questions. The key is to continually evolve in your understanding of yourself, people, and situations. Effective and respected leaders are always learning and never resting on their laurels.

~ The End ~