

By some definitions, Adolf Hitler was a leader. So were Joseph Stalin and Pol Pot. But would you have chosen to follow them?

The most fundamental characteristic of a leader is the presence of followers. You might be a manager or an entrepreneur, but until you have followers, you're not leading.

Acquiring and keeping followers is an essential leadership ability. Military leaders hold their followers by virtue of their authority. Those under their command essentially have no choice. Sweatshop-style organizational leaders use fear, such as loss of job, income, or future opportunity to keep their followers. Some leaders use guilt to motivate loyalty. Each of these leadership styles uses *extrinsic pressures* to motivate followers. And they sometimes work – at least for a while.

Here are two foundational building blocks for future-focused leaders:

- 1. Intrinsic Values.** Instead of extrinsic pressures, build on the *intrinsic values* of your followers. *We like* to follow leaders who help us become our best and accomplish things we care about. Ask followers of Gandhi or Martin Luther King.

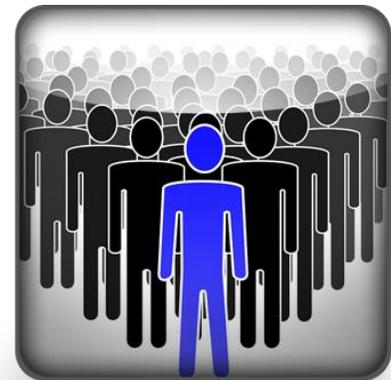
Values change across generations as well as from person to person. Previous generations' values, such as discipline, hard work, and adherence to rules, were easy for an organizational leader to tap into. The leader's goals mattered, but the act of being a good follower, in itself, fulfilled some personal values.

Leading with values requires leaders who are in touch with their own values and can communicate them with contagious passion. It also requires leaders to be students of their followers' values and be able to connect the dots between their own values and those of their followers. Strong synergy between the leader's personal values, the values of the organization, and the individual followers' values generates energy and relational commitments that drive productivity.

- 2. Shared Vision.** A leader needs to be going somewhere. Leadership involves change and it involves choices, both of which can take followers outside their comfort zone. Followers who are motivated by the leader's vision find more courage to weather the challenges of change.

Some people aspire to leadership because they want to be *in control*. But leading into the future is less about control than building a *shared vision* and executing on it. That doesn't mean abdicating leadership responsibilities in favor of anarchy, but it does require more leadership by *influence* than leadership by decree. Next generation workers value (in fact, feel entitled to) being able to speak into their environment and how it works.

Ask yourself, would you prefer to follow someone leading by extrinsic pressures or by tapping into your intrinsic values? Under which leadership would you be more motivated and more productive? Does your fulfillment come from just doing a hard day's work, or is it important to you that your work contribute toward some greater good? Do you care whether you can influence *how* you impact that greater good, or are you content just doing what you're told? Those are the kinds of questions the people you're leading are asking...



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