

Embrace Your Inner Leader

Whether or not you consider yourself a leader, you have valuable leadership abilities to offer. Leadership does not always have to take form of the stereotypical “big boss.” Leaders are guides, supporters, decision-makers, initiators, ideators, planners, and so much more.

Extroversion, an affinity for control, and a loud personality are not requirements for being a leader. Contrary to popular belief, introverted and soft-spoken people can be highly effective leaders.

No matter your current position or your personality, you can tap into your strengths and mold them into positive leadership qualities. Anyone can be a successful leader!

What makes a good leader

Brush up on your people skills. A successful leader is more likely to be defined by their interpersonal skills than skills related to power and dominance.

A good leader knows how to listen and communicate well. When their followers address an issue, need guidance, or are looking for support, it is the role of the leader to affirm their struggles and help brainstorm a solution.

This is where the decision-making, initiating, ideating, and planning comes in. A leader is a creative thinker who can not only ideate projects and solutions but also someone who can thoroughly plan the success of the initiative.

An effective leader will play to the strengths of their team for a collaborative and efficient effort.

Finding leadership opportunities

Even if your current position does not explicitly include direct leadership responsibilities, there are ways to explore leadership. In your current role, can you lead a project, lead a meeting, or lead a training?

Sometimes, you may carry out leadership responsibilities without knowing it, as certain authoritative, directional, or influential tasks are just part of your day-to-day. However, you can maximize these skills by recognizing yourself as the leader.

Once you are comfortable articulating your leadership qualities and successes, inquire about additional leadership opportunities in the workplace. If this is not a feasible option, you can find outside opportunities through passion commitments such as volunteering, coaching, tutoring, teaching, mentoring, etc.

The key is to build your resume as a leader in any way possible. With multiple forms of leadership in your toolbox, you are able to take control of your professional trajectory.

Leveraging your leadership skills

After identifying your leadership qualities and enhancing your skills, it's time to start leveraging your leadership skills. Framing your responsibilities and commitments as leadership experience can change your career outlook.

Make the decision easy for your employer or a hiring manager. A natural leader is a perfect candidate for a promotion. A leader also shows tremendous potential for prospective employers.

Showcase that you can go above and beyond and have more to offer. Not only can you market the job-specific skills you have in your current and previous roles, but you can also promote your ability to lead: to collaborate, organize, plan, evaluate, communicate, problem-solve, etc.

Embrace your inner leader to land yourself a new position, more responsibility, and potentially—more money!