

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

What Makes A Leader Different?

All of us know leaders who stand out in a crowd, who have risen to the top and who accomplish significantly more than their peers. Let's examine some of the characteristics that make these leaders different:

- **VISION** - Leaders have a clear picture of what they see their group becoming or doing in the future. There's a difference between eyesight and vision. Vision is the ability to get MEANING from eyesight. Effective leaders have vision.
- **GOAL-DIRECTED** - Leaders know where they stand, where they're going and how they're going to get there. They realize that no one ever accomplishes anything of consequence without a goal. Leaders also realize that in order to fulfill their vision, they need a series of goals that will help them do so. Effective leaders are goal-directed.
- **CLEAR PURPOSE** - Leaders know why they exist, what they believe and what their values are. Having a clear purpose gives them the energy and focus they need to accomplish their goals and fulfill their vision. Effective leaders have a clear purpose.
- **SELF-CONTROL/SELF-DISCIPLINE** - Leaders are many times required to do things that ordinary people don't like to do. The truth of the matter is, leaders probably don't like to do them either. The difference between a leader and an ordinary person is that a leader does whatever it takes to accomplish the goal, and many times this requires self-control and self-discipline. Effective leaders have self-control and self-discipline.
- **ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE** - To achieve their goals and fulfill their vision, leaders need to persuade others to take action on their ideas. This requires that they think clearly, speak clearly and listen carefully. Effective leaders have the ability to communicate.
- **ENERGY** - Leaders need the physical vitality and mental alertness that comes from a high level of energy. Hard work, clear thinking, commitment and persistence require a high level of energy. Leaders boost their energy through proper diet, nutrition, exercise, positive thinking, rest, relaxation and an outside hobby or interest. Effective leaders have a high level of energy.
- **PERSISTENCE** - There are only two reasons why most projects fail: not starting and not finishing. Leaders finish what they start because they remember their vision, focus on their goals and visualize their goals as already accomplished. They have the staying power and persistence to follow through on their goals regardless of circumstances or what other people say, think, or do. Effective leaders have persistence.
- **POSITIVE ATTITUDE** - Leaders look at how things can be done, not why they can't be done. They look for ways over, around, or through obstacles. They have an "I will not be denied" attitude. To paraphrase W. Clement Stone, "There is little difference between ordinary people and leaders. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether the attitude is positive or negative." Effective leaders have a positive attitude.

To be a more effective leader, clarify your vision and purpose. Develop a written and specific goals program. Develop your self-control, self-discipline and ability to communicate. Maintain a high energy level by taking care of your mind and body. Persist in all you do, and approach every challenge and opportunity with a positive attitude. Do these things and you'll not only be different, but you'll also MAKE A DIFFERENCE.