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Everyday People, Extraordinary Leadership

How to
Make a Difference
Regardless of Your
Title, Role, or Authority

CHAPTER 1

Leadership Is Not a Position

WHEN YOU HEAR the word “leader,” what immediately comes to mind?

Maybe you think of someone with a title, such as CEO, president, prime minister, or admiral. Maybe you think of some famous public figure, such as a celebrity actor or singer, start-up founder, or pro athlete. Maybe you think of someone from the history books who led a revolution, conquest, or world-changing movement. Or maybe you think of someone who created a breakthrough invention, won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize, wrote a best-selling novel or Grammy-winning song. It’s rather common to see these kinds of responses. They are reinforced every time you read one of those lists of the “50 Greatest Leaders of the Year.” In fact, if you take a look at one of the most well-known lists, you’ll see that 100 percent of the so-called “greatest leaders” fall into these categories.¹ It’s true for young leaders as well. In a list of young global leaders prepared by the World Economic Forum, 85 percent of the young leaders held the title of a senior executive, founder, or government official.² The majority of “leaders” who make these lists and are featured in the popular press are people with titles and at the apex of their organizations.

It's not that these individuals aren't leaders. They are. It's just that they are *not* the *only* leaders on the planet. In fact, they aren't even the majority of leaders. We've collected data from millions of people around the world and we can report, without a doubt, that there are leaders everywhere. There are leaders in every profession, discipline, and field, in every type of organization and industry, every religion, and every country; you find them from young to old, male, female, and gender non-conforming, across every ethnic and cultural category. Leaders are not just found at the top of organizations; they abound at all levels, including the middle, as well as on the front lines. There are leaders outside of formal organizations, too, in neighborhoods, community associations, clubs, sports teams, and families.

You could have a title like manager, director, or vice president. You could have people who report to you directly, but these would not necessarily make you a leader. Titles are granted, but being a leader is something that you earn, and you earn it not by your place in the organization but by how you behave. And through your behavior, you earn recognition as a leader in the eyes of those around you, and in the relationships you have with them. Indeed, it's much more likely that you are a leader who is a parent, coach, teacher, frontline worker, project manager, volunteer, community activist, or concerned citizen. You could also be a leader who is an individual contributor, professional, volunteer, analyst, consultant, representative, administrator, engineer, or scientist. You don't have to be at the top to lead; you can lead from any position or place.

So let's get something straight right from the start. Leadership is *not* a hierarchical level. It is not a title or a rank. It is not a position of power or a place of privilege. When you look up the word *leadership* in the dictionary it does not start with an uppercase *L*. It starts with a lowercase *l*, and *lead*, *leader*, and *leadership* literally derive from the word meaning "to go" or "to guide." That's what leadership is all about: going places and guiding others.

From whom do people seek this kind of guidance and direction? We decided to find out.

Leadership Is a Relationship

In a global study involving over 35,000 people, we asked them to think about the individuals in their lives who were their role models for leadership.³ We provided a number of categories from which their leadership role model might come. Take a look at the list in Table 1.1. From which category is the one person whom you would choose as your leadership role model?

Whom did you select? When thinking back over their lives and selecting their most important leadership role models, respondents overwhelmingly nominated a family member more often than anyone else. Next most important were a teacher or coach and an immediate supervisor. Those under 25 years of age (Gen Z) had these ranked second and third, while Millennials (Gen Y and Gen X; ages 25 to 55) and Boomers

TABLE 1.1 Leadership Role Models

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actor or Entertainer• Business Leader• Coach• Community Leader• Co-Worker/Colleagues• Family Members• Immediate Supervisor• Religious Leader• Political Leader• Professional Athlete• Teacher• None/Not sure

(56 and older) had them ranked in the reverse order. For those in the workplace, their teachers and coaches are their immediate supervisors. Another 6 percent indicated a co-worker or colleague. Altogether these four categories accounted for more than three-quarters of all responses. Eight percent indicated “none/not sure,” which meant that only 16 percent of all responses were in the categories of business leader, community leader, political leader, religious leader, actor or entertainer, and professional athlete. This pattern is relatively stable across genders, ethnic groups, educational levels, industries, professions, and even hierarchical levels.

The data clearly shows that the people selected are individuals respondents are closest to. They are not the people in the news, on TV, or in social media. They’re the ones with whom people have had the most frequent contact. In other words, leadership role models are *local*. While famous folks may occupy the headlines, those with whom you have more personal contact are most likely to become your role models and have more influence over how you lead and how you develop as a leader. And make no mistake about it, the same realization applies to you. You very well could be the leadership role model for those closest to you—more than could someone on that so-called list of the world’s best leaders.

These results have extremely important implications. Parents, teachers, and coaches are the individuals who are setting the leadership example for young people. It’s not hip-hop artists, movie stars, professional athletes, or others making news on social media who inspire them about leadership. And if you are a parent, a teacher, or volunteer coach, *you* are the one they are most likely going to look to for the example of how a leader responds to competitive situations, handles crises, deals with loss, or resolves ethical dilemmas. It’s not someone else. It’s *you*.

The findings also reveal that if you’re in a work organization, you are more likely to find role models among your colleagues on your immediate team than at the pinnacle of the organization or somewhere on the outside. If you are now a supervisor or manager, *you* may already be someone’s role model. You are more likely than any other person in the organization to influence their desire to stay or leave, the trajectory of their careers, their ethical behavior, their ability to perform at their best,

their drive to wow customers, and their motivation to share and serve the organization's vision and values.

There's no escape. To some, *you* are or could be their role model for leading. Those individuals could be colleagues on your team, they could be peers in another part of your workplace, they could be kids on the youth athletic team or club you coach after work, they could be people from your community who are working with you as a volunteer, or it could be your son or daughter, spouse or partner, at home.

A question for you to consider: If you are potentially a role model for someone, wouldn't you want to be the best role model you can be? It's your choice. Just be aware that regardless of title or position, be it at home, in school, the community, or workplace, you must take responsibility for the quality of leadership the people around you observe and receive. You are accountable to yourself and others for the leadership you demonstrate.

The individuals selected most frequently as leadership role models—family members, teachers, coaches, immediate supervisors, and co-workers—also make evident the most important finding of all. They underscore the truth that *leadership is a relationship*. Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. This is true regardless of whether the relationship is one-to-one or one-to-many. If you are going to be a leader whose guidance others want to follow willingly, there must be a human connection, something that binds you and others together. It's the quality of this relationship that will determine over the long term whether others will follow your lead or not. To lead effectively, you have to appreciate the underlying dynamics of the leader-constituent relationship. It's extremely important to understand, therefore, the qualities that people look for in the leaders they would *willingly* follow. If people are going to want to follow you over the course of a project or the course of a career, what do they *most* want to see in your behavior?

A relationship between people characterized by fear and distrust will never produce anything of lasting value. A relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance. Any discussion of leadership must attend to

the dynamics of this relationship. Strategies, tactics, skills, and techniques are empty without an understanding of the essential human aspirations that connect people with their leaders and leaders with their people.

Credibility Is the Foundation of Leadership

What sort of person would you listen to, take advice from, be influenced by, and willingly follow, not because you have to, but because you want to? What does it take for you to be the kind of person that others want to follow, doing so enthusiastically and voluntarily? Understanding and responding to these expectations is essential to the exercise of exemplary leadership.

To understand this leader-constituent relationship we have routinely been conducting surveys over the past 40 years about the personal values, traits, and characteristics that people indicate are most important to them in an individual they would willingly follow. A key word in this sentence is “willingly.” It is one thing to follow someone because you think you have to “or else,” and it’s another when you follow an individual because you want to.

We’ve gathered responses from more than 120,000 respondents, and they have been striking in their consistency over the years.⁴ Our evidence shows that people must pass several essential character tests before they earn the designation of leader from other people, as demonstrated by the data presented in Table 1.2.

All the characteristics receive votes, and therefore each one is important to at least some individuals. What is most evident, however, is that over time, across continents, demographic, and organizational differences, only four have continuously received the majority (over 60 percent) of the preferences. What people most look for and admire in a leader has been constant. If people are going to follow someone willingly, they must believe the individual is honest, competent, inspiring, and forward-looking.

TABLE 1.2 Personal Values, Traits, and Characteristics That People Look for in Their Leaders*

Value, Trait, or Characteristic	Percentage of Respondents Selecting This Category*
Honest (truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character, ethical)	87
Forward-looking (visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, has sense of direction)	69
Competent (capable, proficient, effective, gets the job done, professional)	67
Inspiring (uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, optimistic, positive about future)	66
Intelligent (bright, smart, intellectual, logical)	45
Broad-minded (open-minded, flexible, receptive, tolerant)	38
Dependable (reliable, conscientious, responsible)	34
Supportive (helpful, offers assistance, comforting)	36
Fair-minded (just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving)	40
Straightforward (direct, candid, forthright)	34
Cooperative (collaborative, team player, responsive)	27

(Continued)

TABLE 1.2 (Continued)

Value, Trait, or Characteristic	Percentage of Respondents Selecting This Category*
<i>Courageous</i> (bold, daring, gutsy)	24
<i>Caring</i> (appreciative, compassionate, concerned, loving, nurturing)	22
<i>Determined</i> (dedicated, resolute, persistent, purposeful)	22
<i>Imaginative</i> (creative, innovative, curious)	22
<i>Ambitious</i> (aspiring, hard-working, striving)	19
<i>Mature</i> (experienced, wise, has depth)	16
<i>Loyal</i> (faithful, dutiful, unswerving in allegiance, devoted)	15
<i>Self-controlled</i> (restrained, self-disciplined)	10
<i>Independent</i> (self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-confident)	6

* Note that several synonyms are included in each category.

While the fact that what people look for in their leaders has remained consistent over time, despite the ever-shifting forces affecting economic and social life, there is another profound implication revealed by this data. These survey results have a solid conceptual foundation in what social psychologists and communications experts refer to as “source credibility.”

In assessing the believability of sources of information—whether newscasters, salespeople, physicians, or priests; whether business executives, military officers, politicians, or civic leaders—researchers typically evaluate them on their perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism. The more highly people are rated on these three dimensions the more credible they are perceived as sources of information.⁵

Notice how remarkably similar these three characteristics are to the essential qualities people want from their leaders—honest, competent, and inspiring—three of the top four items selected in our surveys. Link the theory to this data, and the striking conclusion is that people want to follow leaders who, more than anything, are credible. *Credibility is the foundation of leadership.* People must be able, above all else, to believe in their leaders. To willingly follow them, people must believe that the leaders' word can be trusted, that they are personally passionate and enthusiastic about the work, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead.⁶

If you are going to ask others to follow you to some uncertain future, and if the journey is going to require hardships and possibly sacrifices, then it is imperative that people believe in you. People must be able to believe that your words can be trusted, that you will do what you say, that you are personally excited and enthusiastic about the direction in which the group is headed, and that you have the knowledge and skills to lead.

This all leads to the *First Law of Leadership*: *If people don't believe in the messenger, they won't believe the message.*

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

So what is it that leaders do to build and sustain credibility? What do they do that makes others see them as capable and trustworthy leaders? What are the behaviors that people exhibit that engage and mobilize others to want to follow? What are people actually *doing* when they are leading and making extraordinary things happen?

To answer these questions, we have been asking people since the early 1980s to tell us what they did when they were at their “personal best” as leaders. We continue to ask this question in our studies and workshops around the world. We have collected thousands of Personal-Best Leadership Experiences—stories about times when individuals report how they excelled at leading, when they were operating at peak performance—from across a wide variety of settings, nationalities, organizations, levels, ages, genders, educational backgrounds, and the like. We’ve interviewed students in universities, individual contributors at work, middle managers in large and small companies, volunteers in the community, and executives in the C-suite about times when they excelled at leading—when they were doing their best as leaders.

Before finding out what others said, reflect for a moment on something that *you* would consider your Personal-Best Leadership Experience. This experience could be a time when you emerged as the informal leader, or it could be a time when you were appointed to take on the lead role in a new project. It could be in any functional area, in any type of organization, in a staff or line role. The experience does not need to be in your current organization. It could be in a prior job, a club, a community volunteer setting, a professional organization, a school, a team, a congregation, or even a family setting. It could be a project to improve a product or service, an initiative to bring about a change in your neighborhood, the turnaround of a poorly performing team, the start-up of a new business, jumping in during a crisis, or any other kind of challenge that required leadership.

When we initially analyzed the themes in the thousands of personal-best stories we had collected, two meta-lessons emerged and continue to be front and center. The first lesson we learned is that *everyone has a story to tell*. Regardless of whom we ask, people are able to identify a time when they did their best as a leader. The specifics of the personal-best stories varied from person to person because the individuals responding to the Personal-Best Leadership Experience Questionnaire were different from one another along a myriad of factors. Despite any individual differences, settings, and circumstances, the second lesson we learned is that the

actions and behaviors of leaders when at their best are *more similar than they are different*. There is a set of *common behaviors and actions* that people demonstrate when they operate at their personal-best as leaders. These behaviors are universal, and they have stood the test of time and place.⁷ Moreover, hundreds of independent scholars have validated this framework in their own studies investigating the central role leadership plays in personal well-being, organizational productivity, and effectiveness.⁸ The evidence is clear: exemplary leadership is found in every corner of the globe, every sector of society, every community, every organization, and every type of individual.

We've grouped these behaviors into a *leadership operating system* that we call The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.⁹ When making extraordinary things happen, leaders:

- ▶ Model the Way
- ▶ Inspire a Shared Vision
- ▶ Challenge the Process
- ▶ Enable Others to Act
- ▶ Encourage the Heart

Let's take a brief look now at each of The Five Practices. We will explore them more completely in Chapters 2 through 6. In those chapters you will find numerous stories and examples about how people much like you have applied them in their settings. We'll also provide several practical ideas about how you can learn to be the best leader you can be.

Model the Way Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that earns you respect. This sentiment was expressed in everyone's personal-best case, as represented by such comments as "I couldn't tell anyone what to do, I had to show them," "I had to be a role model for the behavior I wanted from others," and "I had to be clear about my personal values and then make sure that I walked the talk." Exemplary leaders know that if

they want to earn the respect of the people around them and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. Exemplary leaders *Model the Way*.

To effectively model the way, you first must be clear about your guiding principles. You must *clarify values by finding your voice*. When you understand who you are and the values you hold dear, then you can speak authentically about the beliefs that you want to guide your decisions and actions. But *your* values aren't the only values that matter. Leaders don't speak just for themselves. They also speak for the group, and in every team, organization, and community, there are others who also feel strongly about matters of principle. As a leader, you also must help identify and *affirm the shared values* of the group you are working with. Without an agreed-on and collective understanding of what is right and what is wrong, then anything goes, and there are neither practical nor ethical standards for people to follow.

When it comes to determining how serious leaders are about what they say, however, a leader's actions are far more important than their words. People listen to the talk, and then they watch the walk. Words and actions must be consistent for leaders to be believed, so exemplary leaders *set the example by aligning actions with shared values*. The best way that you prove that something is important is by doing it yourself. Through daily actions, leaders demonstrate their deep commitment to their beliefs and to the shared values of the groups they are part of.

Inspire a Shared Vision People describe their Personal-Best Leadership Experiences as times when they imagined exciting and meaningful futures for themselves and others. They reported actions such as: "I told the team that we need everyone's commitment to make our vision a reality, to reach our dreams and make them happen," "The more I imagined what was possible, the more clearly I could describe what the future might hold in store for all of us," and "We had to be aligned so that we could find a common purpose as a team going forward." They had a desire to create something that no one else had ever created before. They had visions of what could be, and they had absolute faith and confidence

that those aspirations could become reality. When performing at their best, leaders *Inspire a Shared Vision*.

In many ways, leaders live their lives backward. By building upon experiences, they see pictures in their mind's eye of what success will look like even before they've started their projects, much as architects draw blueprints or engineers build models. Their clear image of the future pulls them forward, and they are able to speak enthusiastically and energetically about the compelling possibilities. They *envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities*.

Yet visions seen only by leaders are insufficient to create an organized movement or a significant change. People will not follow until they can embrace a vision as their own. They must be able to see exciting possibilities for themselves. To realize a vision, then, leaders have to be clear not only about why it is important to them, but they must be equally clear about why it is important to those they lead. To perform at their best, leaders *enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared ideals and aspirations*.

When you truly understand and take to heart the hopes and dreams of those you are involved with, you can breathe life into the aspirations of others. You are able to forge a unity of purpose by explaining and showing how and why the dream is for the common good. The way you ignite passion in others is by expressing contagious enthusiasm for the compelling vision of the group, communicating their zeal through vivid language and an expressive style.

Challenge the Process Every single personal-best leadership case involved some change from the status quo. Not one person claimed to achieve a personal best by keeping things the same, doing what had always been done. They said: "I needed to change the business-as-usual climate by finding ways to experiment and learn," "We began by brainstorming what we would change if anything was possible," and "We found that big things are done by doing lots of small things." This is why leaders *Challenge the Process*.

Challenge is the crucible for greatness. It provides the context in which adversity and vision interact to provide for the creation of

something new. When at their best leaders are pioneers. They are willing to step out into the unknown and continuously *search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve.*

While they are proactive, leaders aren't the only creators or originators of new programs, services, or processes. In fact, it's more likely that they're not. Innovation comes more from listening than from telling—more from asking questions and hearing what others are thinking and have to say. When challenging the process, your primary contributions are often the recognition of good ideas, the support of those ideas, and the willingness to challenge the system to get new products, processes, services, and systems adopted.

We also found that in the Personal-Best Leadership Experiences, leaders had to *experiment and take risks by continually generating small wins and learning from experience.* Leaders know well that innovation and change all involve trial and error. One way you can deal with these potential risks and failures is to approach change through incremental steps. Little victories, when piled on top of each other, build confidence that people can meet even the most significant challenges. In making those victories possible, you strengthen commitment to the long-term future.

Learning also unlocks the door to progress, and exemplary leaders make a point to ask “What can we learn?” when things don't go as expected. The best leaders are the best learners, treating every experiment, every innovation, and every mistake as an opportunity to develop and grow.

Enable Others to Act Leaders know they can't do it alone. Grand dreams don't become significant realities through the actions of a single person. In their personal-best cases, they showed their appreciation of this truth with statements such as: “It was necessary to take into consideration each person's perspectives and ensure that the decisions were made by the team and not individual decisions,” “The key was building relationships with people who were needed to help us make this happen,” and “Giving them the space and latitude to do their work gave

them the confidence to do what hadn't been done before.” Leadership is a team effort, not a solo performance, and to make extraordinary things happen in organizations exemplary leaders *Enable Others to Act*.

Leaders proudly discussed how they had to *foster collaboration by building a climate of trust and facilitating relationships*. They engage all those who were necessary to make the project work, and develop collaborative relationships with colleagues. They are considerate of the needs and interests of others. They bring people together, creating an atmosphere where people understand they have a shared fate and that they should treat others as they would like to be treated. They make sure that everyone wins.

This experience underscores how the work of leaders is making people feel strong, capable, and committed. Leaders *strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence and confidence*. People don't stick around for very long or perform at their best if their leader makes them feel weak, dependent, or alienated. People will give their all when you can strengthen their belief that they can do more than they ever thought possible. In fact, it was not unusual for people to indicate that when working with their best leaders, they gave more than 100 percent of themselves to the endeavor because that leader was able to bring out from them more than what they themselves had imagined. When people have confidence in you and your relationship with them is based on trust they are most willing to take risks, make changes, and maintain forward momentum.

Encourage the Heart The climb to the top of any new and challenging endeavor is arduous and steep, and it is not surprising that people can become exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted. Leaders indicated in their Personal-Best Leadership Experiences that they had to *Encourage the Heart* of those with whom they were working to carry on, especially when they might have been tempted to give up. They said things such as: “You have to show people that you care about them as people and how they are capable of doing a lot more than they think,” “Praise and encouragement are the best gifts because people need to have

their hard work and efforts acknowledged, to know that they are making a difference,” and “We were generous with compliments and this allowed us to feel good about ourselves, and when you feel good you are more productive.”

Genuine acts of caring, whether exhibited in dramatic gestures or simple actions, uplift people’s spirits and keep them motivated. It is part of a leader’s job to *recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence*. Over the years, we’ve seen thousands of examples of individual recognition and group celebration, from handwritten thank-you notes to marching bands and biopic video ceremonies. But recognition and celebration aren’t about fun and games—though both abound when leaders encourage the hearts of their constituents. Encouraging the heart is also not about orchestrating formal awards ceremonies or throwing parties designed to create some artificial sense of camaraderie. It is about *celebrating the values and the victories by creating a spirit of community*. Public encouragement is valuable because it’s how you visibly reinforce what’s important and show appreciation for actions that support the team’s values. Whether striving to raise quality standards, recover from disaster, or make a dramatic change of any kind, people must see the benefit of aligning behavior with cherished values. When celebrations and rituals are done with authenticity and from the heart, you build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group through tough times.

These five leadership practices—Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart—do not represent an ideology or theory about leadership so much as they provide an operating system for what it means to be practicing leadership, and making a difference. Engaging in any of the behaviors associated with The Five Practices does not necessitate any particular personality or require any specific demographic characteristics or advanced educational degrees. There’s a very good chance that you are already leading; you just might not recognize that you are doing it. Or perhaps you don’t believe you can exercise leadership and don’t see yourself as a leader; in that case, there’s a very good chance that what you think you can’t do, you won’t do.

You Are Already Leading

Another essential lesson we learned when analyzing Personal-Best Leadership Experiences is that leadership is a set of *behaviors and actions* that are available to everyone. Leadership is *not* some mystical quality or the private reserve of a special class of charismatic people. It is not a gene or a trait in the DNA of a blessed few. It is not a single personality characteristic or a special innate talent that some people have and others do not. It is not a singular strength, and it is not a gift from the gods.

We repeat: Leadership is a set of behaviors and actions that are available to everyone. Let's check out that claim! For each of the questions below, please answer "yes" or "no." Have you ever:

- ▶ Spoken about one or more values that you hold dear?
- ▶ Set a personal example of what you wanted someone else to do?
- ▶ Talked excitedly about something that might be possible, even though it didn't exist today?
- ▶ Asked someone else to go along with you to do something?
- ▶ Tried to make something work better than it was currently?
- ▶ Been one of the first people to try something new or different from what you were used to doing?
- ▶ Listened intently to someone else's point of view, someone you didn't necessary agree with?
- ▶ Helped someone else learn how to do an assignment or work better?
- ▶ Said "thank you" to another person for a job done well?
- ▶ Taken part in a celebration recognizing the accomplishment of a colleague?

These are just some of the actions that leaders take day-in and day-out when at their best, and if you answered "yes" to many or most of the

questions above, then congratulations because this means *you are already leading*. Maybe you are not leading frequently enough, but you are leading. On the other hand, if you answered “no” to most of these questions, we think you’ll agree that all of them are actions you could take if you were convinced that doing so would be beneficial, resulting in greater well-being and productivity for yourself and others.

Leadership is in the actions that you take. It emerges from the values that guide your decisions and behavior. It results from the visions you have for yourself and others. It is evident in the changes you initiate and the challenges you accept. It appears in the trust you build and the connections you strengthen. It’s about how you lift others up and how you make others feel valued.

Even though we can demonstrate to you that leadership is something you—and others—can do, leadership myths persist. And clearly those myths include believing that leadership comes with a title or position, that it requires a set of direct reports, and that leadership is some genetic quality that is in short supply. Becoming an exemplary leader begins with the *belief* that everyone is capable of leadership and that you can be a better leader than you are right now because you can learn to improve your skills and abilities. It is also essential that you believe that your actions matter and that leadership makes a difference.

Leadership Makes a Difference

Exemplary leadership makes a significant difference in people’s levels of well-being, commitment, and motivation, their work performance, and the success of their organizations. That’s the definitive conclusion from analyzing data from over three million respondents around the world using the *Leadership Practices Inventory* to assess how often people engage in The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.¹⁰ Those leaders who most frequently use The Five Practices are considerably more effective across a variety of outcomes than their counterparts who use them less often.

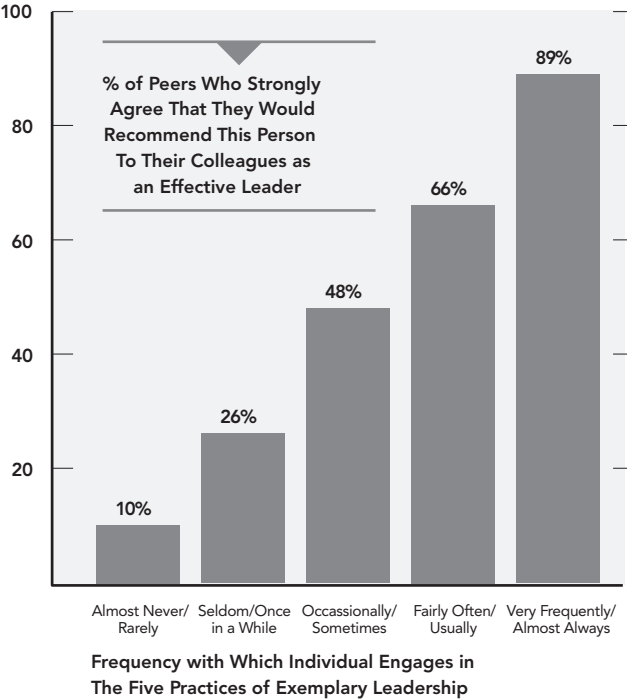
Looking at the data just for those people who indicate they are “individual contributors” (as opposed to executives, middle managers, or supervisors) reveals the same pattern as these overall findings. In each of the subsequent chapters we present empirical evidence from their peers that further substantiates these results.* For example, there is a very strong correlation ($r = .67$) between the likelihood of “being recommended to colleagues as a good leader” by one’s peers and the frequency to which they observe the individual engaging in The Five Practices. As shown in Figure 1, the more frequently that one’s colleagues and co-workers observe that person engaging in The Five Practices, the more strongly they agree that that individual is a good leader. This certainly makes sense. You can’t be regarded as a leader if you don’t behave as a leader.

So you don’t have to be in a leadership position or have direct reports in order to make a difference to your colleagues and co-workers or to be seen as most effective by your manager. The bottom line empirically is that the more you utilize The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, the more likely it is that you’ll have a positive influence on other people and the organization. That’s what all our data and the scores of research conducted by independent scholars¹¹ add up to: If you want to have a significant impact on the people around you and the organizations you are involved with, you’d be wise to invest in learning the behaviors that enable you to become the very best leader you can.

While The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership don’t *completely* explain why leaders and their organizations are successful—which is actually good news because you should be very skeptical of anyone who promises perfection or offers a money-back guarantee—it is clear that engaging in them makes quite a difference no matter who you are,

* Unless otherwise indicated, when we refer to “data” we are using the results from the sample and analysis described in the Appendix. The sample generally involves the independent viewpoints of the co-workers and colleagues who were asked to provide feedback on the leadership behaviors of one of their peers. They completed the Observer version of the *Leadership Practices Inventory*, provided demographic information, answered various questions regarding their workplace attitudes, and offered assessment of the leadership effectiveness of their peer.

Figure 1 Likelihood of Being Recommended as a Good Leader by Peers Increases with Greater Frequency of Leadership Practices



what you do, or where you are located. How you behave as a leader matters, and it matters a lot. *You* are the leader who makes the most difference in the lives of those you lead. And you are the one who has to determine how to match these practices and their associated behaviors to the settings and circumstances that you face. That’s how you combine the art of leadership with mastery of the science of leadership.

In the next five chapters are detailed descriptions of what people do to Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. You will find stories and examples of people just like you who demonstrate each of these leadership practices, and we provide ideas, tools, and techniques that you can use on your leadership development journey.

CHAPTER 1 Leadership Is Not a Position

As you read each of the chapters, keep in mind the key messages from this overview of our research on what people are doing when they are leading:

- ▶ Leadership is not a position or hierarchical place or genetic trait
- ▶ Leadership is a relationship
- ▶ Leadership role models are local
- ▶ Leadership is everyone's business
- ▶ Credibility is the foundation of leadership
- ▶ Leadership is an understandable, observable, and learnable set of behaviors and actions
- ▶ You are already leading . . . and you can exercise leadership more frequently
- ▶ Leadership makes a difference
- ▶ You make a difference

In the next chapter we explain how you begin to earn the trust of the people around you. We show how you Model the Way by clarifying values and setting an example for others.

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