

**The Eagle's Perch – November 2009**  
**Your Leadership Resource for**  
**Practical Insight, Powerful Impact**

What's Your Leadership Verdict?  
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**Practical Insight**

True leadership – that which inspires others to maximize their potential – is not bound by organizational titles. However, one might reasonably expect, by virtue of your managerial title, that certain leadership qualities will be evident. With all that is required of leaders, it is tempting to shift our focus from our ongoing personal development to achieving our business goals. If you were accused today of being a leader, what verdict would be reached in your case?

In addition to growing up in a community that included solid leadership examples, I was fortunate enough to be directly influenced quite early in my career by a man whose actions place him at the top of my “great leaders” list. This experience created a strong foundation for my personal growth and, perhaps to the chagrin of a few of my future leaders, quite high expectations for who and what a leader should be.

What does the evidence say about your leadership?

- 1) **Exhibit A - Your behavior, not your rhetoric, defines your leadership.**  
Great leaders are defined by how they do what they do to positively influence individuals and organizations. “Do as I say, not as I do” is not a positive leadership tactic. Continual reminders to others that you are the leader might create cynicism and minimize respect for you but actions supporting accountability, open and honest communication – even when the news is not great – and a genuine desire to help others be their best will result in increased trust and commitment to organizational goals. If you are not clear about how others view your leadership, consider launching a feedback assessment with the help of your Human Resources organization or a professional coach. You can only fix what you are willing to face.
- 2) **Exhibit B – What you do not say is just as important as what you say.**  
Those who make your success possible appreciate your consideration. Even if they have grown accustomed to something other than that, most people simply want to be treated with respect. When you are too busy for a “good morning” or they overhear you betraying another’s confidence by publicly discussing personal or performance problems, it chips away at your leadership integrity. A leader with high integrity strongly influences a similar organizational culture. We sometimes get very comfortable in our

work environments, especially if we have worked in our teams for quite some time. If there is a change that needs to occur in your organization, be a leader and let it begin with you.

3) **Exhibit C - Deal with challenges professionally and deliberately.**

Regardless of what the challenge is, if it is overlooked or allowed to fester, all eyes are on you. What you do not confront, you condone by default. Leaders are expected to solve problems – or at least rally the resources needed for direct action. Is it uncomfortable sometimes? Yes! But it is often through our discomfort that we experience the most significant personal growth.

### **Powerful Impact**

Who do you admire as a leader?

What is one positive behavior that you admire about him or her that you do not currently exhibit?

How can you model – not mimic – that behavior?

When will you commit to working toward that goal?

Under close examination, would there be evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to convict you of great leadership? Starting today, present a strong case by getting back to leadership excellence basics.

### **In Other Words...**

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

- John Quincy Adams

### **Lifelong Learning**

Developing the Leader Within You, John C. Maxwell