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Flashback to Leadership

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A number of years ago, 2009 to be exact, I participated in a leadership program that would forever change my life. Many talk about game-changer experiences, and for me this was one of them. The program was the Regional Leadership Forum (RLF), hosted by the Society for Information Management (SIM). It is an intensive, year-long development program focused on creating authentic leaders.

There has never been a time when the value of strong leaders is greater. A leader is one who must know his or her morals and values and instinctively do the right things.....day in and day out. Organizations seek individuals who understand how to lead and not just manage,

individuals who want those around them to succeed, and those who are constantly willing to learn and become better.

In part, the program involved reading and discussing many leadership books and listening to business executives discuss leadership topics. I took pages and pages of notes from my experience. Many of the key items learned came in the form of quotes from these two sources, and I want to share those here. Some of these quotes you may have already heard, but my hope is to give you some things to think about to help you increase your ability to be a great leader...

- Leadership is much more of an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs of artful leadership are expressed, ultimately, in its practice. - Max De Pree
- If you can get to the people, you can get it done. - Scott Berkey
- There is more wisdom between us than there is within us. - Patricia Madson
- In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock. - Thomas Jefferson
- Empower people. If I have to make the decision I asked you to make, why did I hire you in the first place? - Anonymous RLF Member
- We tend to judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intent. - Cliff Higbee
- A good manager is a dispenser of caution. A good leader is a dispenser of hope. - Sam Valanju
- Attach problems, not people. - Sam Valanju
- Goals without actions are a daydream... Actions without goals are a nightmare! - Sam Valanju
- God has given us 2 eyes and 2 ears but only 1 mouth for a reason. - Sam Valanju
- He who has a "why" to live for can bear with almost any "how." - Viktor Frankl
- Our behavior is governed by principles. Living in harmony with them brings positive consequences. We are free to choose our response in any situation, but in doing so, we choose the attendant consequence. When we pick up one end of the stick, we pick up the other. - Stephen R. Covey
- The glass is not half-full. The glass is not half-empty. The glass is just twice as large as it needs to be. - Tom LaMantia
- Manger = Teacher, Boss = Jackass - Tom LaMantia
- Titles don't mean jack! Influence means much more. - Tom LaMantia
- Good leaders surround themselves with people better than they are. - Unknown
- Play to the moment. Be who you need to be right then. - Tom Lucas
- Leadership has nothing to do with an org chart. Managers worry too much about org charts. Leaders don't. You don't even need staff to be a leader. Leadership is about context, strategy, and execution. - Tom Lucas
- Fail early, fail fast. - Tom Lucas

- Execution gives you the right to be strategic. - Tom Lucas
- Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible. - Colin Powell
- People leave managers, not companies. - Marcus Buckingham
- Managers do things right, while leaders do the right things. - Marcus Buckingham
- Only 7% of what is said is just the words. - Rebecca Shafir
- Top 3 failures of a leader: 1) Lack of commitment, 2) Lack of communication, and 3) Lack of honesty. - Mike Jones
- Distinguish yourself by crafting or looking for ideas that will make a difference. - Chip and Dan Heath
- Work for your family, not for the company. - Art Hopkins
- The authentic leader brings people together around a shared purpose and empowers them to step up and lead authentically in order to create value for all stakeholders. - Bill George
- At the end of the day, the only thing you take with you is what you leave behind. - Bill George
- Find your strengths. Very little progress will be made when we only focus on our weaknesses. - Ron Thieme
- The key with management and leadership is knowing what hat you're wearing. - Ron Thieme
- Don't just grow quantitatively. Grow just as much qualitatively. - Ron Thieme
- Lead as you live. Live as you lead. - Ron Thieme
- Learn to lead from the back, front, and side. - Richard Dooley
- If you have a trust problem, look to time as a solution. If you have a time problem, look to trust as a solution. - Richard Dooley
- Don't get caught up in the notion that 2nd place is the first loser. - Dewitt Jones
- Look at change curves as possibility curves. - Dewitt Jones
- Look for that edge between good and significant. - Dewitt Jones
- Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. - Gandhi
- You must be the change you want to see in the world. - Gandhi
- Leadership = Listening to what is wanting to emerge and having the courage to do what is required. - Joseph Jaworski
- You can react to a situation, or you can respond. - Joseph Jaworski
- Other skills can be built, but trust MUST be there from the very beginning. - Eric Gorham
- Commitment, dedication, and hard work will not always pay off in dollars, but it will always pay off in satisfaction. - Eric Gorham
- It's your life. Invent the story! - Ben Zander
- The leader's job is to speak possibility. - Ben Zander
- An "A" grade is an expectation to live into, not an expectation to live up to. - Ben Zander
- Within ourselves, we tend to look at the art of the probable, rather than at the art of the possible. - Scott Lane

- There is a heart side to everything. You don't and can't leave the heart at the door. You have to create a sense of wholeness. - Mary Jo Greil
- Work to have the capacity to change before the case for change becomes obvious. - Mary Jo Greil
- Leadership is service, not selfishness. The leader grows more and lasts longer by placing the well-being of all above the well-being of self alone. - Mary Jo Greil
- If everything seems under control, you're not going fast enough. - Mario Andretti
- Happiness belongs to the self-efficient. - James O'Toole
- There's only one reality... the one that you're living! - Nelson Still
- As bad as a passage may sound, it's not the event itself that hurts a career, but how it's reacted to. - David L. Dotlich
- Leaders must decide on what matters in life before they can lead a life that matters. - James M. Kouzes
- There's no such thing as perfection, but in striving for perfection, we can obtain excellence. - Unknown
- In life, if you stop learning, you stop leading. - Unknown
- The barrier to change is not too little caring... It is too much complexity. - Dan Roam
- The more human your picture, the more human the response. - Dan Roam
- We spend a lot of time teaching people what to DO, but we don't spend enough time teaching people what to STOP. - Peter Drucker
- Don't waste your time with those who don't care. Spend your time with those who do. - Marshall Goldsmith
- You only need to be good at 2 things in life... Learning and Changing! - Darwin John
- You have to learn it to lead it. - Darwin John
- If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea! - Darwin John
- Those who understand much may be wise, but those who understand themselves are even wiser. Those who are master over many may be powerful, but those who have mastered themselves are more powerful still. - Lau Tsu
- Vision without execution is hallucination! - Albert Einstein
- To be a leader, all I have to do is be ME. - Unknown

We all have our own way to define leadership. Thank you for sharing with me in mine.