

Leadership

Elizabeth A. Ruiz

University of Houston-Downtown

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The way leaders change the way people think about what is possible is based on four components: “(a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals (Northouse, 2016, p. 6).” “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2016, p. 6).” For over a century, people have attempted to define leadership without “universal consensus” leaving us with more than two hundred “different definitions for leadership (Northouse, 2016, p. 2).” Leadership produces change and movement by (Northouse, 2016, p. 14):

Establishing Direction

- Create a vision
- Clarify big picture
- Set strategies

Aligning People

- Communicate goals
- Seek commitment
- Build teams and coalitions

Motivating and Inspiring

- Inspire and energize
- Empower followers
- Satisfy unmet needs

A real-world example of a leader that has done this is Steve Jobs. As Northouse (2016) states, a leader is:

at the center of group change and activity and embodies the will of the group. And leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics that some individuals possess which enable those individuals to induce others to accomplish tasks. Also, it is an act or behavior to bring about change in a group. In addition, leaders have power that they wield to effect change in others. Other definitions, leaders move followers to accomplish more than is usually expected of them. Finally, some scholars address leadership from a skills perspective. This viewpoint stresses the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership possible.

Steve Jobs embodies the traits of a leader per the definitions in our book – the best argument in chapter one which sums up Steve Jobs is that leaders are more proactive and more emotionally involved (Northouse, 2016, p. 17). In an article in Harvard Business Review a writer wrote (Isaacson, 2012):

The essence of Jobs, I think, is that his personality was integral to his way of doing business. He acted as if the normal rules didn't apply to him, and the passion, intensity, and extreme emotionalism he brought to everyday life were things he also poured into the products he made. His petulance and impatience were part and parcel of his perfectionism.

“The author asked him about his tendency to be rough on people. “Look at the results,” he replied. “These are all smart people I work with, and any of them could get a top job at another place if they were truly feeling brutalized. But they don't.” Then he paused for a few moments and said, almost wistfully, “And we got some amazing things done (Isaacson, 2012).”” During Jobs final days he was surrounded by an intensely loyal cadre of colleagues who had been

inspired by him for years and a very loving wife, sister, and four children. To sum up the Harvard Business Review article the author wrote (Isaacson, 2012):

I think the real lessons from Steve Jobs have to be drawn from looking at what he actually accomplished. I once asked him what he thought was his most important creation, thinking he would answer the iPad or the Macintosh. Instead he said it was Apple the company. Making an enduring company, he said, was both far harder and more important than making a great product. How did he do it?

Business schools will be studying that question a century from now.

To read what Isaacson considers the keys to Jobs success as a leader, go to this link:

<https://hbr.org/2012/04/the-real-leadership-lessons-of-steve-jobs>

References

- Isaacson, W. (2012, April). The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs. *Harvard Business Review*. Boston, MA, USA. Retrieved July 11, 2017, from <https://hbr.org/2012/04/the-real-leadership-lessons-of-steve-jobs>
- Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
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