

## How Do You Define Your Leadership?

Consider this definition of personal leadership: Personal leadership is the self-confident ability to crystallize your thinking and establish an exact direction for your own life, to commit yourself to moving in that direction, and then to take determined action to acquire, accomplish, or become whatever you identify as the ultimate goal for your life.

Personal leadership involves the development of a positive self-image that gives you the courage and self-confidence necessary to make a conscious choice of a specific course of action that will satisfy your needs, to follow that path, and to accept responsibility for the outcome. Personal leadership demands conscious assumption of control over your own destiny through the establishment of personal goals that give depth and meaning to every action. When you possess personal leadership, you can write your own ticket to success; you can name your own price for fame. Anything you can visualize is yours – money, power, prestige, acclaim – when you meet challenges with confidence and demonstrate true personal leadership.

While everyone practices personal leadership to some extent, few of us have developed our personal leadership abilities to their fullest potential. As a result, the personal leadership we exhibit is often inconsistent because we have not been adequately trained in its art. Besides of the lack of instruction, another principal reason for not using personal leadership is the lack of experience. Inexperience makes us reluctant to act for fear of making mistakes. As a result, we fail to gain the fundamental experience in personal leadership that would assure success.

You have the potential for personal leadership. To at least some degree, you have already developed your ability; and what you have learned in part, you can master and perfect. Personal leadership is not created by situations but by your response to them. Nothing restricts your personal leadership potential except the artificial limitations you place on your own mind.

### Your Untapped Potential

Along with the desire to achieve goals and to find purpose and meaning in life, you were given the means for reaching your goals. You are equipped with a vital reserve – an untapped potential – equal to your needs. Recognizing your

untapped potential is the first step to preparation for personal leadership. The scientists who study human behavior agree that few people ever use more than a small portion of their potential. We all have infinitely more talents and abilities than we ever use.

Because your potential is virtually unlimited, success must be defined in terms that allow for stretching your limits to reach new heights. Here is a definition of success that is broad enough to include all of your dreams yet specific enough to produce belief: Success is the progressive realization of worthwhile predetermined personal goals.

Because you are a goal seeker and are almost continuously unsatisfied, you find success only in progressive realization of goals. It is not enough to set goals; you must realize them by working toward them. They must be your

own goals, compatible with your inner sense of values. If your goals are to hold your attention and attract you to them, they must be predetermined, and finally, they must be worthwhile – worthy of your best efforts. They must, in some measure, call upon your reserve strengths, your untapped potential.

The principal reason many people do not find success is that they look for it by comparing themselves to others. If you evalu-

ate success through comparison of yourself to others, then the more people you know, the less likely you are to feel successful. Life will be one big disappointment after another. On the other hand, you may be more successful than a neighbor, a brother or sister, or your parents and still be a dismal failure if you fall far short of your capacity for success. The only valid comparison you can make is to compare what you are to what you have the potential to become. You will be successful only when you resolve to develop your untapped potential and measure your success in the progressive realization of worthwhile predetermined personal goals.

Three tools are available for use in developing more of your potential:

- ▲ Believe in your potential. Once your potential is put into action, it grows and gains momentum. Like an avalanche crashing down a mountainside, it sweeps every obstacle from its path.
- ▲ Exercise self-reliance. You are the only one who can discover and use your potential. Trust your ability.
- ▲ Act with initiative. Be decisive. Refuse to wait for someone to tell you what to do.

