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CARE's WorkLife Solutions Weekly Wire

The Right to Lead

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Log-on to www.caresworklivesolutions.com and click on the green WorkPlace Programs tab on the top bar. You can choose either Tips Sheets for Employees or Tips Sheets for Management from the dropdown -- each offers a variety of topics including this one.

You can explore more website resources by clicking on the World Icon and entering your unique company password. The website offers close to 100 online skill Builder Trainings on various topics and over 100 Ready Docs. (If you do not have a unique company password, please contact CARE's WorkLife Solutions and request a temporary password).

What gives someone the right to lead?

John C. Maxwell has devoted his career to answering that question. An internationally recognized leadership expert, speaker and author who has sold over 18 million books, John has shared his knowledge with diverse audiences, from international governments to the leaders of Fortune 500 companies, training over 2 million leaders world-wide.

In John's book, ***The Right to Lead***, he shares true stories about leaders from all walks of life and what made them worthy of followers. Below is the introduction to his book that offers some thoughts to ponder.

What gives a man or woman the right to lead?

It certainly isn't gained by election or appointment. Having position, title, rank, or degrees doesn't qualify anyone to lead other people. And the ability doesn't come automatically from age or experience either. No, it would be accurate to say that no one can be given the right to lead. The right to lead can only be earned. And that takes time.

The key to becoming an effective leader is not to focus on making other people follow, but on making yourself the kind of person they want to follow. You must become someone others can trust to take them where they want to go. As you prepare yourself to become a better leader, use the following guidelines to help you grow:

1. **Let go of your ego.**

The truly great leaders are not in leadership for personal gain. They lead in order to serve other people. Perhaps that is why Lawrence D. Bell remarked, "Show me a man who cannot bother to do little things, and I'll show you a man who cannot be trusted to do big things."

2. **Become a good follower first.**

Rare is the effective leader who didn't learn to become a good follower first. That is why a leadership institution such as the United State Military Academy teaches its officers to become effective followers first - and why West Point has produced more leaders than the Harvard Business School.

3. **Build positive relationships.**

Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less. That means it is by nature relational. Today's generation of leaders seem particularly aware of this because title and position mean so little to them. They know intuitively that people go along with people they get along with.

4. **Work with excellence.**

No one respects and follows mediocrity. Leaders who earn the right to lead give their all to what they do. They bring into play not only their skills and talents, but also great passion and hard work. They perform on the highest level of which they are capable.

5. **Rely on discipline, not emotion.**

Leadership is often easy during the good times. It's when everything seems to be against you - when you're out of energy, and you don't want to lead - that you earn your place as a leader. During every season of life, leaders face crucial moments when they must choose between gearing up or giving up. To make it through those times, rely on the rock of discipline, not the shifting sand of emotion.

6. **Make adding value your goal.**

When you look at the leaders whose names are revered long after they have finished leading, you find that they were men and women who helped people to live better lives and reach their potential. That is the highest calling of leadership - and its highest value.

7. **Give your power away.**

One of the ironies of leadership is that you become a better leader by sharing whatever power you have, not by saving it all for yourself. You're meant to be a river, not a reservoir. If you use your power to empower others, your leadership will extend far beyond your grasp.

We, at CARE's *WorkLife* Solutions agree with John C. Maxwell that "leadership isn't learned or earned in a moment". Developing great leadership skills takes time and ongoing devotion, which is why we offer a wide variety of training opportunities in this area. Please give us a call today to learn more or visit our website to view our training catalog or take an on-line Leadership Skill Builder.