

Leadership observations

Bob 'Idea Man' Hooley

“Learning is the essential fuel for leaders, the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas, and new challenges. It is indispensable under today’s conditions of rapid change and complexity. Very simply, those who do not learn do not long survive as leaders.” Warren Bevis & Burt Nanus

Here are some leadership ideas drawn from observations and lessons learned first-hand from a wide range of leaders. I have been blessed with some great role models – leaders in business, industry, association management, community service, Toastmasters, my NSA and CAPS colleagues, and from my parents, my wife, and friends. Here are some **shared characteristics** observed from the leaders in my life and experience.

Leaders are not born

Leaders emerge and need to be nurtured by other leaders who see their potential. Leadership is a learned skill, honed by experience and by finding the inner motivational points that inspire people to assume leadership in various aspects of their lives. Leaders are *revealed* when people see value and follow their direction.

I often saw this first-hand in my Toastmasters and CAPS leadership. When I approached people and asked them to tackle a challenge, they often took personal leadership and championed its eventual success.

Leaders are open to change

Leaders have the courage to **lead change** and deal with the turmoil of change. Positive change often happens when someone takes personal leadership and responsibility in a situation and is open to grow.

Leaders develop a sense of adventure and a realization that change is not always a *negative* event. Leaders see themselves as catalysts for innovative change. A true leader will see the plateau or status quo as an opportunity or foundation to move ahead and make positive changes.

Leaders are creative

Leaders are flexible in finding solutions to common challenges. Often it is the creative approach that shows the way out of the problem or mess at hand. This creative outlook may even create new products or entire industries. The leader looks for that creative or innovative *twist* which will unlock the secret to solving the challenge. They are persistent in looking for innovative ways to solve problems and will inspire others to do the same.

Leaders make mistakes and build on lessons learned

Life is about learning and leadership even more so. Leaders take *calculated* risks and sometimes they make mistakes or fail. The difference being, *true* leaders understand this and learn from the experience. This is a great part of the leadership process! Failure fuels their determination to

succeed. They will move ahead, better informed, striving for the next opportunity to **‘lead and learn’**.

Leaders are forged in the heat of reality, moulded on the anvil of adversity, by the hammers of life

Personal leadership emerges in the heat of the worst challenges and conditions in your life. You can choose to take personal responsibility for your leadership role and abilities to act. I have seen the most unlikely men and women take this leadership role when the going was tough or the odds overwhelming – and succeed where others simply complained or quit trying. **Leaders don’t quit; they quietly find the strength and keep going.**

Leaders are more often readers



This may not hold true of every leader. However, many of those men and women I have grown to respect make *selective* reading a definite part of their leadership growth path. They read outside their own areas of knowledge, experience, and industries. They are open to learn from a myriad of sources. They have found that in a multitude of counsel there is wisdom. *Fortunately for me, they are open to share it.*

Reading allows you to access the wisdom of the ages from leaders long gone as well as from current and emerging thought leaders. Selective, strategic reading provides value-added information that allows you to explore new ideas, new methods, and new ways of thinking. It gives you the leadership and career development ammunition you need to set, stretch, and successfully reach your goals.

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Leaders are the foundation upon which our success is given substance

In my life this is certainly true! I can look back to the pivotal points in my life and often there was the guiding hand of a leader who invested in my life, growth, and well-being.

You might see parallels in your own life and career. So many men and women and organizations have played a role in helping me to hone my talents and enhance my skills which allowed me to discover that I had hidden leadership strengths and skills.

I have been humbled by their investment, their encouragement, and the recognition I have garnered along the way.

“My continued leadership growth and sharing of my leadership lessons are my gift back to them for the faith they showed in my life. Leadership is a ‘giving back’ life style of choice and commitment.” Bob ‘Idea Man’ Hooey

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Bob ‘Idea Man’ Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include **‘Legacy of Leadership’, ‘Why Didn’t I THINK of That’, ‘Speaking for Success’** and **‘The Courage to Lead!’** His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative Ideas At Work have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies.