

Leadership Prep

Take a long, hard look at yourself and see if perhaps there are some areas you need to prep yourself in regard to leadership so that when you really get going you don't have to stop and go back!

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So you want to be a leader? Or you want to be a better leader? It can be done, you know.

**No matter where you
are in your leadership
journey, you CAN
move forward. You
CAN lead better. You CAN lead
more people. You CAN lead your
organization to higher ground.
Yes, you CAN!**

But let me tell you this: You won't do it via osmosis! It won't just "happen." Growing in your leadership is not something that comes from the fairy godmother of leadership. You can't touch the hem of Jack Welch's garment and become "Super-Leader!" Oh, that it were that easy!

So what does it take?

Time.

Experience.

Training.

Hard Knocks.

A Mentor.

Discipline.

And a few others.

But let's start at the very beginning. You want to be a leader. That's good. You want to be a better leader. That's good too. But what comes first? Preparation. Leadership Prep. What is it? What needs to happen in order to get yourself ready to become a leader? As you get ready for 2012 and you want to take the next step in your leadership, take these last days of the year and go through a little reflection on Leadership Prep.

Before you become the leader you want to be:

Count the cost. Leadership is hard. There will be times that you say, "Leadership isn't worth it. These people are crazy and I don't deserve this." It is true.

You don't deserve it. But you choose it. You choose it because you want to lead people. You want to improve their lives. You see the higher ground that they cannot see and you desire to take them there.

It will take time. It will take money. It will sap your strength and energy. Count the cost, my friend. Leadership is not for the weak and timid. Yes, the rewards are great, but so are the sacrifices. Prep yourself for the cost of leadership.

Assess your strengths and weaknesses. Too many people dive into trying to lead and end up dying out because they were not honest with themselves about their strengths and weaknesses. They get going and realize that they should have strengthened themselves in certain areas because now it is killing their ability to lead. If you know your strengths, then you can focus yourself on them and allow yourself to be successful through them. If you are aware of your weaknesses you will be able to stay away from them, or hire to cover them, and thus allow yourself to become even more successful as a leader. So prep yourself by becoming exceedingly clear on your strengths and weaknesses.

Settle in for the marathon, not the sprint. Very few - I mean VERY few - people get big leadership assignments at early ages. And when they do, even fewer of the few see things happen fast in their leadership. No, usually things happen slowly. Why do we think they will happen fast then? Because those are the only stories we hear on TV and read about in magazines. "Twenty-five year old starts business that grows to \$20 million a year in sales in JUST TWO YEARS," Sells a lot better than "Forty-five year old works hard for twenty years and builds lasting business that makes a difference in her community." Right? Right.

So, unless you are one of the chosen few, you will need to prep for a marathon, not a sprint. This is both a mental and emotional adjustment that needs to be made. Prep for the long haul!

Develop a learning attitude. You have perhaps heard it said, "Leaders are readers." It is true. Even more so, leaders are learners. I don't know any leader who has attained any level of leadership who doesn't keep him or herself on the edge of learning. One of my mentors runs a company that you would all know by name - in fact, you probably used one of their products today, no matter where you live in the world - that does billions of dollars a year in revenue (Yes, with a "b") and he still takes time each year to go to a school of leadership! He is already a tremendously successful leader yet he is still working on it! THAT is a learning attitude! If you want to lead, prep yourself for it by developing a learning attitude.

Acquire a love for people. In reality, we do not lead organizations or businesses. No, we lead people. We are successful if we know how to lead people. People are the name of the game. And the best way to become a leader of people is to love people. Others can tell instinctually whether or not we love them and have their best interests at heart. If they do not know that we care for them they will not follow.

Leadership is the art of directing people who we care for and

desire to help. In other words, we love people. If you have an issue with people, chances are you are not ready to lead them.

To prep yourself for leadership, acquire a love for people. If the other things are in place, then they will want to follow you.

You CAN become a leader. I truly believe that. If you are already a leader, I know you can become better. Take a long, hard look at yourself and see if perhaps there are some areas you need to prep yourself in regard to leadership so that when you really get going you don't have to stop and go back!

Leadership Prep - that's the place to start!



Chris Widener is an example of how anyone can overcome any odds to achieve a successful life and help others achieve the same. Chris has overcome many obstacles... living through his father dying suddenly when he was four, being sent away from his family to live with relatives at age nine and becoming involved with drugs and alcohol by the age of twelve. Chris overcame those obstacles and

has for the last ten years worked with some of the most financially successful families in America, helping them to achieve both personally and professionally. Now he can do the same for you!