



## The Emotional Issue of Leadership

If people were honest and tuned into their own feelings they would admit being jealous of those people able to show characteristics of leadership. Their jealousy focuses on the benefits leaders typically enjoy: the money they earn, the houses they live in, the society they keep, the members of the opposite sex they attract. Their jealousy even extends to the ability leaders have to make people follow them!

Of course it's easy to be jealous. It's not a particularly difficult emotion to generate within ourselves, and it's certainly not an emotion that requires much imagination. If it did, people probably wouldn't be jealous at all.

Why not? Because people are usually short-sighted when they feel jealous about leaders. They see the rewards of success but not the responsibilities that go with leadership.

Take film stars for example. How many people who are jealous of the lifestyle of a film star ever pause to think of the years of embarrassing and humiliating poverty that went into the creation of the glamorous career; years which the star had no way of knowing would ever be crowned by success? And how many people think of the enormous responsibility of completely mastering one's role in a film and being able to recreate precisely the right emotion in every scene? Film stars are also expected to inspire others with the skill and professionalism that makes people believe in the product and believe that the product is of Oscar-winning material. At the same time they need to be strong enough to handle honest, direct feedback and appraisal on a continual basis. It's no picnic.

Film stardom is not a typical type of leadership but it still deserves mention here because it's an extreme example of how people see the lifestyle but not the burdens. All leadership is intensely creative, and creativity is always enormously demanding and exhausting. The emotional burden of being the person at the top who motivates others never stops being awesome. Unlike people who are led, leaders can't have off days. They can't be weak or foolish, and ideally they can't really afford to be vulnerable.

Last month I promised to start discussing how you can become a leader. The very first step you need to take in that direction is to ask yourself the following question: Do I really want a life where I am continually expected to inject energy and drive into a situation, continually looked to for authority? Am I really prepared to put my work and others who work for me first, before hobbies, social life, holidays and even in many cases before family and friends?

If your honest answer to this question is 'no' that's fine, but other things being equal you're more likely to be of manager calibre rather than a born leader. If your sincere answer to those questions is 'yes', perhaps leadership really is your destiny. Next month we will look at some other essential attributes of leaders beyond a willingness to spare no effort, and to make every sacrifice to achieve leadership success.

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