

Lessons Leaders Need to Know

July 15th, 2008 by Mark Sanborn

These are lessons I either learned early (thankfully) or I wish I had learned earlier (regrettably).

1. The responsibility and service of leadership always outweigh the recognition and status.
2. Responsibility is rewarding, but it isn't about rewards
3. Anyone can lead but not everyone should lead. If you don't have your heart in it, you'll be mediocre at best.
4. Leadership doesn't make *a* difference; leadership makes *the* difference, personally and organizationally.
5. Anything the leader does that benefits only him- or herself was done out of ambition; leadership done right benefits others as well.
6. Consensus building is harder but far more powerful than control.
7. Your impact will rarely be bigger than your vision.
8. People draw big conclusions for little gestures and interactions.
9. As John Maxwell says, "It shouldn't be lonely at the top." If it is, you've done something wrong getting to the top.
10. I learned from the autobiography of John Ashcroft that as a leader more people will befriend you than be your friend. Understanding the difference is critical.
11. The best way to gain cooperation is by asking, "How can I help you?"
12. Leaders make time for what's important.