

WHAT MAKES A GREAT LEADER

In our pursuit of professional and personal success, we long to be in control of our destiny. This control gives us impetus to take various steps and decisions which we feel bring us closer to our goals. However, for most of us, these decisions are good or bad depending upon the outcome. As we observe the environment around us, we compare ourselves to others who too are in similar situations. And when we see them get ahead, we feel frustrated about our lack of leadership skills. A question that constantly nags us is how can we become great leaders? What makes a great leader?

As a Serial entrepreneur for over 17 years, I have had a chance to observe closely people in various leadership positions across verticals and vocations. I have identified four abilities that I feel make a great leader:

- Ability to be accountable
- Ability to take risks
- Ability to think beyond the obvious
- Ability to anticipate events and reactions

It is my belief that every decision maker is a leader. Accountability for one's actions is the cornerstone of leadership. Thus, leadership is not just about leading people. It's also about taking decisions and being accountable for these decisions. Irrespective of the outcome of that decision, great leaders embrace the consequences of that decision as their own. The buck well and truly does stop at the leader's desk and a great leader positively acknowledges that fact.

Leaders know that with every decision they make, they run the risk of failure. Fear of failure can paralyze the sharpest of minds thus blunting the entrepreneurial streak within. Great leaders have the risk taking ability which often takes their team into uncharted waters. But the captain of his ship puts his professional reputation on the line by taking risks, knowing that the rewards of success far outweigh the doubts of failure. It is this risk taking ability that is the foundation of entrepreneurship, so vital for society's advancement.

Great Leaders always have multiple points of view while looking to solve a problem. A uni-dimensional approach rarely gets the desired results. The ability to think beyond the obvious solutions that subordinates usually have, is what separates leaders from great leaders. This ability is also called lateral thinking, which exposes the team to so many possibilities and permutations in resolving issues. A holistic view broadens the mind and great leaders always apply various tools and arrive at the best solution, which serves as the basis for making their decisions.

From afar, it may seem that a great leader is always at the right place at the right time. While we wonder how this happens, leaders know that they must think of the consequences of their decisions four steps ahead than required. In this manner, they avoid potential and disasters. This ability to anticipate consequences gives great leaders almost a soothsayer like quality. With the help of the correct Leadership Training tools, people in leadership positions can fine-tune and even enhance their decision making models.