

Do you really truly want to be a leader?

Before you say yes, ask yourself these seven rather personal questions.

To most of us, the *idea* of being a leader at work is extremely appealing.

From where we sit, the boss's job looks great. Power. Respect. Salary. What's not to like?

Well, that depends. It depends on you - on what you bring to the job in the first place and what you're willing to give to the job hour-after-hour, day-after-day, year-after-year. Being a leader is a hard gig.

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Do you have what it takes? Or are you more valuable, more fulfilled - and a whole lot happier - as a contributing member of a highly-effective team?

Here are seven questions you should answer before you commit yourself to the next rung on the corporate ladder:

1. **Are you too smart to need 'team' ideas?** An inspiring leader knows how to encourage colleagues to think and speak up - and then to listen to their ideas. The word is *en*-courage: to give team-members the *courage* to think bravely and to air their ideas confidently. Listen! You'll be surprised by how much you hear.
2. **Do you set yourself daily performance goals?** Great leaders were self-starters from the start, setting themselves daily goals and quietly achieving them with a minimum of supervision. But many of us do our best work when our goals are set and we know exactly what's expected of us. Goal-setter or goal-getter? It's your choice.

3. **Are you 100% committed to your company's success?** Such a commitment shows in a manager's seemingly instinctive ability to inspire loyalty and keenness that goes well beyond the mere pay-packet. Get to know to know your organisation *as a whole* - outside the day-to-day mechanics of your own section. It will make you proud of what you're doing.
4. **Are you a rule-follower or a rule-breaker?** The most successful businesses are built by men and women who brush past the barriers of the status quo to enthusiastically embrace change. Think about what you do and how you do it. If you see a better way of doing it, speak up!
5. **Do you express your ideas well?** An exciting idea is exciting when and if you sell it to the other members of your team. Only crisp, clean, clear communicators need apply.
6. **Do you arc up when your judgement is questioned?** If you can't take criticism from a fellow team-member, you'll become a no-feedback manager operating in an ideas vacuum.
7. **Are you a 'people-person' or a 'lone-ranger'?** The best managers are the ones who wholeheartedly welcome and acknowledge ideas from everybody in the team. Loners are ... *loners*.

OK. You've answered the questions and you've either come through with flying colours, or you haven't. If management is where you've set your sights, you can see where you need to hone your skills and to do something about it.

But not everybody is cut out to be a leader - and not everybody wants to be one. There are other priorities in life: after all, being an effective member of an effective business team is just as legitimate a measure of professional success as reaching the topmost rung of the corporate ladder.