



## The Eight Keys to Leadership Greatness

To reach your full potential as a leader, apply these eight laws identified by retired Air Force Reserve Maj. Gen. William A. Cohen, as a professor of leadership at California State University:

1. **Maintain absolute integrity.** “You cannot maintain your integrity 90% and be a leader,” Leonard Roberts says. It has to be 100%. Mr. Roberts is the CEO of Arby’s. When he became the CEO, the fast food chain was struggling. He turned it around by promising more service, support and money to his franchisees. When the Arby’s owner disagreed and refused to pay staff bonuses, Roberts resigned from the board in protest and the company fired him.
2. **Know your stuff.** Not yet 30 by the time he directed *Jaws*, Steven Spielberg already was a self made man. Rejected twice by the University of Southern California’s film school, Spielberg simply rented a trailer at Universal Studios and started making contracts. The studio president hired him because he knew his stuff.
3. **Declare your vision.** “Most organizations fail because they do not have a vision,” says former southwest Airlines CEO Howard Putman. “When you have a vision and someone comes to you with a convoluted idea, you can hold up your vision and ask: “Does it fit?”
4. **Show uncommon commitment.** Dell Computer Corp. rose from nowhere to No. 1 in six months because of Michael Dell’s commitment to speed. He also saved money through assembly and distribution deals that saved even more time.
5. **Expect positive results.** Start by turning disadvantages into advantages. In the early 1900’s steel magnate Andrew Carnegie commissioned a reporter to research success. He discovered: hidden within every disadvantage or obstacle lay an equally powerful opportunity. Leaders that are successful look for those opportunities.
6. **Take care of your people.** Mark Peters worked as director of operations at a Florida fire alarm company. Peters oversaw several managers, many of whom had degrees. The one who didn’t became Peters’ go-to man, but he earned far less than the others because of the companies bias toward degreed employees. Peters pled the man’s case to the CEO, and won both the raise and the his loyalty.
7. **Put duty before self.** Homer Laughlin China Co. survived the Great Depression but by the late 1970’s could not compete with cheaper imports. Laughlin’s stuck it out for the next generations by investing in a new kiln and revived an old design called Fiesta. Bloomingdale’s launched the revived brand, and Homer Laughlin is now the largest U.S. pottery company.
8. **Stand out in front.** When Peter Ueberroth agreed to run the 1984 Olympics he made \$215 million in profits by wearing a uniform of a different worker every day. *Adapted from The Stuff of Heroes: 8 Universal Laws of Leadership, William A. Cohen*

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### Leadership Commission

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## Before you join that board.....



Being asked to join the board can boost your ego, but to make sure you can say “Yes” for the right reasons, ask yourself these four questions, recommended by seasoned board members:

1. **“What do I bring to the table?”** Is it knowledge of the field, financial savvy or something else? If your expertise resembles that of the other board members, decline and volunteer where you will make a difference.
2. **“When will I know I have completed my job on the board?”** You should be able to invest a year or two to reach specific goals. Just being there will drain your time.
3. **“What has the board accomplished in the last year, two years, five years?”** Don’t join a board that takes up a lot of members’ time in meetings or retreats without accomplishing much.
4. **“May I talk to three or four current members before I join?”** Ask, “What difference can I make?” If a clear picture doesn’t develop, turn down the invitation. Adapted from Executive Leadership @ [www.Execleadership.com](http://www.Execleadership.com)

*Successful people form the habit of doing what failures don’t like to do. They like the results they get by doing what they don’t necessarily enjoy.*

—Earl Nightingale

## Do It Now!

Are you a procrastinator? Do you put things off that are really important to you? Procrastination can take a surprisingly high toll on your life, causing stress, illness or low esteem. It can also prevent you from attaining your goals. You may not think of yourself as a perfectionist— but you put things off until the time is right. Perfect situations probably never happen. The first step to overcoming procrastination is to “strive for excellence but not perfection.”

Rita Emmet, in her book, *“The Procrastinator’s Handbook: Mastering the Art of Doing It Now”*, relates games that people play when they have something important to do— but do not want to do it. People engage in what she calls “Hypothetical Procrastination”. She asks: “Do you become a traveler, going back and forth to the coffee pot and the fax machine?” Or are you a Perfect Preparer who needs to do more research, read more books or search the internet one more time before you start? Maybe you are a socializer who calls friends and colleagues whom you have not spoken to in years. Happy Helpers put their own work aside in order to help others. Do you recognize yourself in any of these descriptions? Once you become aware of your style, you can watch for it. Hypocritical Procrastination takes many forms but has one characteristic common to all: lack of focus.

When you are feeling overwhelmed, deluged or swamped, think of this Chinese Proverb: “A journey of 10,000 miles begins with a single step”. Make a list of small steps and focus on one item on that list. Can any of these things be streamlined, delegated, or eliminated? Now you are ready to do the job, one task at a time.

—Adapted from *The Procrastinator’s Handbook: Mastering the Art of Doing It Now*, Emmet, Rita, Walker and Company, 2005



Identify all the little jobs of your big project.

## The DNA of Good Decisions and Jim Collins

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After combing through 14 years of research, here's what *Good to Great* author Jim Collins says about the art of making decisions:

- **Great decisions come from saying “I don't know.”** Collins asks “Which is best? Saying you don't know when you have already made up your mind? Or presuming to know when you don't and lying to yourself?” Or speaking the truth by saying: “I don't know?”
- **The higher the questions/statements ration the better.** The best leaders Collins studied did the best job by igniting debate and using Socratic questions.
- **Deciding is not about consensus.** In the end the leader makes the call.
- **Great decisions come from external awareness.** Fabulous organizations are internally driven but externally aware.
- **Even huge decisions decide only a fraction of the outcome.**
- **Think long term**
- **You can make mistakes—even big ones—and prevail.**

## Create Inspiration With Your Communication

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Leaders who wish to inspire, should adopt the following communication techniques, suggests Carmine Gallo, author of *Fire Them Up!* (Wiley):

- **Show enthusiasm**— It is contagious. “You cannot inspire unless you are inspired yourself” Gallo notes.
- **Promote a consistent vision of success.** “A vision is a short vivid description of what the world will look like if your project or service succeeds”, he explains.
- **Push the benefits.** Whatever you are trying to do or present always tell others what is in it for them.
- **Tell memorable stories that underscore why the work matters.** Powerful anecdotes connect with listeners at a visceral level they will take to heart.
- **Get collaborative.** People crave meaningful opportunities to provide their input on projects or plans.
- **Maintain an optimistic outlook.** Even when things look bad, show others what everyone can realistically do to create a more promising future.
- **Plant seeds of genuine praise** and watch today's members grow into tomorrow's leaders.

—Adapted from “*The Seven Secrets of Inspiring Leaders*,” in *Business Week*.

## Resource Recommendation

### *Engaging the Heart:*

### *The Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others*

By James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

A colorful illustration of a classroom. At the top, a teacher is standing at a desk, and several children are sitting at their desks. The room is filled with books, a globe, and other educational materials. The style is simple and cartoonish.

*The Southern Early Childhood Association is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:*

**SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

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- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*
- *Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families.*
- *Increasing public understanding and support for policies and programs which ensure developmentally based services to young children and their families.*
- *Focusing on Southern issues concerning children and families*

## In Changing Times.....

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New things are on the horizon in your state. How can you help members navigate through the transition? Follow these suggestions.

1. **Share positives and negatives:** Some organizations paint a rosy picture of proposed changes and leave members to imagine for themselves what will happen if things do not go as planned. Be honest with your members about the worst case scenarios— and how you will get through this together.
2. **Put things in perspective:** Explain what will change— and what will not. Give members a sense of continuity by reminding them that many things will be the same as before.
3. **Help board members to refuel:** Change is stressful, so now more than ever you need to find reasons to celebrate. Give members a chance to vent their frustrations through organized play.
4. **Seek out the voice of experience.** Look for others in the SECA organization who have been through similar transitions and invite them to address your members and answer questions.
5. **Be open to diversity.** People cope with change and stress in different ways. Do not expect everyone to handle things exactly as you do. Be patient with members as they try to adjust in their own way.

*Adapted from "Tips for Managing Change and Ambiguity," on the Magellan Health Services Web site.*

**“Work has changed from being something you do with your hands to something you do in your head. This means that how people feel is terribly important, because you do better head-work when you are happy”!**

—Alexander Kjerulf, author of *Happy Hour is 9-5*