

Assessments for Leadership Abilities

Are You Cut Out for Leadership? 8 Key Indicators

Answers and Explanations

Good leaders know that the answers to each of the eight questions on the leadership assessment “Are You Cut Out for Leadership?” should be YES. Read the explanations below to learn why.

1. Do you believe that people are basically good and want to do the right things, even if they sometimes don't know what those things are or don't know how to do them?

Decades of social science research (not to mention new quantum physics research) shows that throughout life, we get what we expect to get! The Pygmalion effect. The self-fulfilling prophesy. Old time Theory X managers who expect the worst from everyone need to get a new attitude! Only if you believe in people and expect the best of them can you succeed in leadership in today's world.

2. Do people naturally “come to you” and seek you out about things—interests, problems, joys, or just passing the time?

If people seem to seek you out, this is a good indicator that they admire, trust, or respect you, even if what they often seek you out for is complaints. Being a go-to person is, indeed, a good predictor of leadership potential.

3. Do you get along with most everyone? Oh, sure, there are a few difficult ones, but in general, can you co-exist peacefully with nearly everyone?

Accepting people for who they are, seeing the best in them, and looking beyond their unfavorable qualities is essential to leadership success. When you recognize the good you will get more good. As a leader you will encounter many types of people, and it's important to find the good in each one.

4. Do you have passion or a strong enthusiasm for the organization and its mission?

If you don't believe in it and love it, you will be unable to motivate, inspire, and lead others. If you have long since lost your enthusiasm for your work, this is a significant leadership problem. Every organization and group deserves to have people in leadership positions who believe in and are committed to what they are doing.

5. Are you approachable and available to those around you?

If you make yourself scarce, you build distance between yourself and those you lead. Distance will not serve you well as a leader. Be where your people are! Think of your people not as an interruption of your work—your people ARE your work. If you agree with this, then you have the right attitude for leadership.

6. Are you able and willing to communicate frequently and make communication a top priority in your leadership role?

Talk to people, e-mail people, write notes, talk, talk, talk. It's essential. Say it clearly! Say it more often than you think you need to, and say it in more forms!

Check with people when you communicate. Ask what they think they heard you say or what they think your e-mail meant. Be sure everyone is on the same page. Strong communication skills are the fundamental cornerstone of good leadership.

7. Do you possess a healthy measure of humility?

You have to give away some of the power and let others play a key part in what's going on. As contradictory as it sounds, you can't be successful as a leader unless it's not about you.

Selflessness is one key to success. What you give away freely comes back to you. Make others look good and YOU will look even better. As General Colin Powell has said, "There's no end to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit."

8. Are you able to make firm decisions and take actions, while, at the same time, taking into account the needs and suggestions of others?

A leader can't be a fence-walker. Paralysis by analysis and timidity in decision-making are common problems. One can't be a good leader without being willing to step up and make a commitment. If the decision is later proven "wrong," you can admit it and correct it, but you must make a decision.

How Did You Do?

As noted, the correct answer to each question above is YES. So, how did you do on the assessment? How similar or different were your own answers when compared to the answers of your trusted (and honest!) boss, spouse, friend, colleague, etc. who rated you?

If you had one question that you could not answer with a resounding YES, you can probably still do well in leadership. You can learn to compensate and gradually overcome any weaknesses as you learn new ideas and practice new skills.

If your honest answer to two or more questions was NO, and you still believe leadership is right for you, then it's time for you to get to work. If you are open to learning and changing some of your thinking, then you can still learn to lead well and become more successful. Keep your mind open so you can learn to be more effective in your leadership role.

Did You Notice...?

*Notice that **none of the questions** on the above assessment of leadership abilities asked you to rate how intelligent you are, how much subject-related knowledge or experience you have, or how much direct work experience you have in the area you are leading.*