

SIGMA Leadership Series



**Great Leaders
Inspire Others**



GREAT LEADERS INSPIRE OTHERS

“

If you can't find a good role model, be one.

— Gale Anne Hurd

As a leader, you have a significant influence on your team. That influence can (intentionally or unintentionally) be used for good or for harm. Leaders have a responsibility to be conscious of their impact and set a positive example for others. By modeling healthy, productive behaviors, leaders help followers emulate these behaviors for their own benefit and the benefit of the company. Studies have shown that leaders' habits significantly influence those of their direct reports. For instance, when leaders show up to work sick, their employees are likely to follow suit.¹ Leaders can also shape the degree to which followers engage in selfless behaviors like giving to charity and helping others.² Additionally, followers who observe their leader's passion for work are also more likely to be passionate about their own work.³

Leaders who are inspirational role models set a positive example for direct reports. By intentionally choosing which values to model in group settings, leaders who support and encourage their team can align followers with the broader organizational mission and vision. In turn, followers experience a greater sense of belonging and improved job satisfaction.⁴

In assessing your ability to inspire others, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I aware of my own reasons for being passionate about my work?
- Do I show my authentic self (e.g., feelings, values) at work?
- Am I aware of my personal strengths and can I use them to my advantage?
- How often do I participate in professional development opportunities?
- Do I work towards my team's success rather than just my own?

Improve Your Ability to Inspire Others

Get in touch with your values: Inspiring others begins with inspiring yourself. Leaders who are passionate, act in alignment with their values, and openly speak about those values are more likely to inspire others. For example, leaders who value honesty may express zero-tolerance for lying and freely admit to failures, inspiring their team to behave the same way. To identify your core values, think about your goals, beliefs, and the values influential people in your life have demonstrated (e.g., integrity, kindness). Which of these values would you like to adopt?

Play to your strengths: Besides getting in touch with your values, it's also important to recognize and use your strengths. This may take the form of expressing unique parts of your personality (e.g., a nurturing instinct, or funny side), as well as offering to help others in areas where you have expertise or knowledge (e.g., new software). Followers may be inspired by a variety of characteristics, values, and attitudes, so you don't need to conform to what you believe an ideal leader should be. In fact, it may be important to express non-traditional leadership skills, as this could encourage others to share their unique skills at work as well.

Bring your authentic self to work: Followers are more likely to rally behind a leader they perceive to be genuine. This may involve bridging the gap between your "personal" and "professional" self. Although it's important to put your best foot forward and communicate competence and maturity, it can also be incredibly helpful to share personal information like emotions, past work experiences, and previous successes and failures. You do not have to share information you aren't comfortable with. What's important is that followers feel they understand and relate with their leader; trust is built upon authentic relationships.

Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Inspire Others More Effectively

The following steps can help you become better at being an inspirational role model:

1. **Become a lifelong learner.** Inspirational leaders may consider themselves experts in some areas, but it's important to acknowledge that there's always room to grow. By investing in your personal and professional development, you can inspire followers to do the same. Modelling an attitude of lifelong learning will also teach others that success comes with humility and a commitment to excellence. If your company offers development opportunities, take full advantage of them, and include others in the experience. If no opportunities exist, commit to building and providing them yourself.
2. **Collaborate with your team.** Inspirational leaders set an example for collaboration; they pave the way for working together and building strong teams. Inspirational leaders recognize that no one can succeed alone, so they prioritize cooperation and model what it looks like to work together to accomplish mutual goals. In this way, inspirational leaders also help their teams build strong relationships and perform better as a whole. To inspire a more collaborative culture in your team, try modeling the following behaviors at your next meeting: acknowledging and welcoming differences, asking for help, expressing gratitude, identifying strengths, and encouraging team members to learn from one another.
3. **Communicate well.** A key part of being a role model is fostering open communication among your team. Listen carefully to what others have to say and ask follow-up questions when you need clarification. Be transparent with your team when making decisions or implementing changes (e.g., going with one vendor over another). This will help followers understand your decision-making process and increase their ability to emulate it in the future.

Resources



[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)



[What Makes a Leader Inspirational?](#)



Develop your ability to become an inspirational role model by taking advantage of SIGMA's coaching services.

Contact SIGMA for coaching on developing your skills as a leader.

SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc.

Email: support@SigmaHR.com

Call: 800-265-1285

References

- ¹ Dietz, C., Zacher, H., Scheel, T., Otto, K., & Rigotti, T. (2020). Leaders as role models: Effects of leader presenteeism on employee presenteeism and sick leave. *Work & Stress*, 34(3), 300-322.
- ² Gächter, S., & Renner, E. (2018). Leaders as role models and ‘belief managers’ in social dilemmas. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 154, 321-334.
- ³ Ho, V. T., & Astakhova, M. N. (2020). The passion bug: How and when do leaders inspire work passion? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41(5), 424-444.
- ⁴ Tsai, Y. (2011). Relationship between organizational culture, leadership behavior and job satisfaction. *BMC Health Services Research*, 11, 98.