According to Merriam-Webster Inc., a leader is defined as “a person who has commanding authority or influence”. This definition, however, is very vague as well as void of the important individuality that each person brings to the concept of leadership. It is for this reason that the qualities of a “good leader” are difficult to define. Each individual comes to the table with different leadership styles, experiences, and philosophies. What is important is that each leader takes the time to evaluate not only their own leadership strengths and weaknesses, but also the needs and dynamics of the group with which they will be working. The exercises here will help you to determine what leadership skills are important to you and what kind of leader you may be or want to become.

Who are the Leaders In Your Life?

Often times the most influential leaders in our lives are not famous or well known. They are ordinary people who do extraordinary things (no matter how small) and make an indelible impact in our lives. These are the true people in our lives that we look up to. Take some time to think about these phenomenal people. Why do you look up to them? What qualities do they exhibit that make them invaluable leaders in your life? How do you want to emulate them? Thinking through this activity will allow you to develop a list of leadership qualities that you feel are important to possess to be a “good leader”.

Please list three people you look up to:

Person #1:
What qualities do they exhibit that you admire?

Person #2:
What qualities do they exhibit that you admire?

Person #3:
What qualities do they exhibit that you admire?

“When the best leader’s work is done the people say, ‘We did it ourselves’”.  
-- Lao Tzu
Quick Tips

Here is a list of potentially successful leadership traits. It is nearly impossible for any leader to represent all of these qualities in their work, however you may use the list as a guide to those qualities seen as successful and important for strong leadership. It is also important to recognize that in and of themselves, these traits do not make a leader. Rather it is how you shape and develop these qualities that allow you to successfully lead others. As you read the list think about which you feel you excel at and which you feel you might need to work on. Use this as you continue to develop your leadership capabilities.

• Creativity
• Ambition
• Strong Values
• Cleverness
• Motivation
• Trustworthiness
• Imagination
• Empathy
• Sense of Humor
• Open-Mindedness
• Persistence
• Confidence
• Organization
• Calmness
• Intelligence
• Intuition
• Adaptability
• Likeability
• Dedication
• Tolerance
• Loyalty
• Goal-Oriented
• Passion
• Commitment
• Others?

Pieces of Leadership

Brochures are available on the following topics:

- Budgeting
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Delegation
- Facilitation
- Goal Setting
- Group Dynamics
- Ice Breakers/Team Builders
- Mission Statements
- Motivation
- Officer Transition
- Peer Supervision
- Program Planning
- Qualities of a Good Leader
- Running a Good Meeting
- Stress Management
- Time Management
- Wellness

The information provided in this brochure was adapted from:

Merriam Webster Dictionary Online
http://www.webster.com/

For more information on the topics listed above or to access the resources in our Leadership Library, please visit the

Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development

Located on the
First Floor of the
Usdan University Center
860-685-2460
or check out our website at
http://www.wesleyan.edu/stuact/