



6.5 WAYS
TO KNOW IF YOUR
LEADERSHIP IS MORE
OF A LONELY WALK
WHERE NO ONE IS
FOLLOWING

Michael D. Brown

Leadership isn't just a designation; it is a state. A leader is a person who other people will follow regardless of their official position or title. Often, the person officially designated as the leader isn't really followed by anyone, while someone who is officially powerless might be driving the whole team. There are many indicators which can help determine if your leadership is only symbolic.



1 - PEOPLE COME TO YOU AFTER THEY'VE MADE A DECISION

This is the biggest indicator that your leadership isn't really leadership. For instance, if someone plans on quitting and you find out only when you receive their resignation letter, you may be failing as a leader. When you are truly leading your team, they will come to you for guidance. This means that when they have a job offer from somewhere else they will consult with you as to whether they should switch or stay. If people don't ask for your guidance, then it really isn't leadership.

2 - YOU FIND OUT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TEAM FROM ELSEWHERE

If something happens in your team – a disagreement, someone wanting to leave—any scandal, really—and you find out about it from someone else in the organization, it is a huge red flag. This means that there is a barrier between you and your team. Leaders know their team intimately. They know what everyone is doing and they know everything that happens within the team. If people outside are getting information about your team before you, then there is something wrong with your leadership style.

3 - PEOPLE ONLY TALK TO YOU ABOUT SAFE MATTERS

If people talk to you only about things that are considered safe in the corporate world, then it might be a sign of trouble. True leadership transcends corporate boundaries. This doesn't mean that people will be talking about vulgar material or controversial political subjects. When you are a leader, people come to you with advice and they freely discuss how they feel. There are many leadership styles, but in all of them, the leader is supposed to be the

one providing support and guidance to people. This doesn't mean people should be coming to you to discuss personal matters, but if people stay strictly professional with you, in the same way they do with HR or other higher-ups, then you are just their manager, and not their leader.

4 - THERE ARE PROBLEMS IN YOUR TEAM YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT

Ever see a fight happening in your team and have no idea why people are fighting? This is a failure of leadership. The first thing a leader needs to have is command over their own team. This means knowing when trouble is brewing. Most professional disagreements and fights can be seen coming from a mile away. If you didn't see it coming, it means you weren't really looking. You need to keep a close eye on your team to ensure that everything is going fine.

5 - YOU FIND YOURSELF BEARING THE LOAD ALONE

There's extra work to be done. You are putting your full efforts into finishing it as quickly as possible. You look around and notice that you're the only one who actually seems to be stressed about the work. You're the only one staying late to make sure it is done. This means that you aren't really leading people to do more than they usually do; instead, they are doing just the bare minimum in order to keep their jobs.



6 - YOU ARE EXCLUDED FROM UNOFFICIAL OUTINGS

Every office team ends up becoming friends, after some time. This leads to meeting at bars, watching sports together, birthday parties, and more. If you are a true leader, your team will love to have you with them. If you are just a manager, and the team knows they won't have fun as long as you're there, they will exclude you from any unofficial outings.



6.5 - BECOMING THE LEADER YOU KNOW YOU CAN BECOME

Don't begin disliking your team if they don't see you as a leader. Instead, look into why people don't think of you as a leader. You have to be there for your people. You need to let them know that, if there is any problem, you will help them out. You need to tell them, through your actions, that you don't exist merely to extract work out of them; you're also there to ensure they get what they deserve. This might mean standing up to your boss for your team. It might be difficult to do, but it will be worth it.

ABOUT MICHAEL D. BROWN

Michael D. Brown is a sought-after speaker, Global management expert, and author of *Fresh Passion: Get A Brand or Die A Generic*, *Fresh Customer Service®: Treat the Employee as #1 and the Customer as #2 and You Will Get Customers for Life* and *Fresh Passion Leadership: Become a Distinct, Branded Leader or Extinct Generic*.

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