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5 Remarkably Powerful Habits of Great Leaders

Don't just be a good leader, be a great leader. You, your people, and your business have everything to gain.

Peter Economy | December 24, 2014

There are literally [millions of leaders,](#) in all sorts of organizations, all around the globe. While some run businesses, others lead nonprofits and government offices and agencies. Regardless of the type of organization, however, *great* leaders [all share certain habits](#) in common. And these habits have a profound effect on their people, their customers, and their communities.

Says John Allison, president and CEO of the Cato Institute, and author of the book *[The Leadership Crisis and the Free Market Cure,](#)* when you become a great leader, not only will you be stronger and more effective, but you will be happier. "Leaders often significantly impact the values of other individuals in an organization or society/culture," says Allison. "Teaching individuals (and yourself) to act properly is the source of organizational and societal success, human flourishing, and your personal happiness."

In his book, Allison outlines 5 specific habits that every great leader does--habits that won't just lead to a highly effective organization, but to his or her personal happiness. And isn't that really what we're all searching for in business, and in life?

1. They create and/or communicate a vision of what the organization can be (who you can be)

[Leadership matters,](#) and as a leader, you have the opportunity (and the obligation) to paint and communicate an inspiring vision of what your business can truly be, and the role of each member of your team in creating that great business. Start with creating a vision for yourself--the best leader *you* can be--and then extend that vision to your organization and your people.

2. They develop and/or communicate a purpose for the organization (a personal mission)

Just as every one of us wants to make a real difference in the world around us, so do we all want to want to work for an organization that makes a difference. In the words of Peter Drucker, ask this most important question: "What is our mission?" Answer that question--both for your business and for yourself--and your people will give everything they've got to help you attain it.

3. They grasp the fundamental values that are necessary for human flourishing while living and communicating these values

Ground your own leadership in rock-solid values--things like honesty, integrity, justice, teamwork, independent thinking, and objectivity. Live those values, and then demonstrate them daily to all around you. When your people know that you take these values seriously, and that you will accept nothing less, then they will live them too.

4. They develop a strategy to turn the vision and purpose into reality, consistent with these values

Your vision and purpose cannot become reality without a plan and a strategy for getting there. This strategy will derive from your organization's--and your own--values, and it must be consistent with them. Understand that the world is changing faster than ever, and your strategy must be agile and ready to change with it at moment's notice.

5. They develop processes and feedback/coaching mechanisms that reinforce the behaviors and beliefs that lead to individual mastery and organizational success

As a leader, you have a profound and long-lasting influence on the people you lead. It's up to you to provide the members of your team with opportunities to do great things for your organization, and to provide them with the training to sharpen their skills. Trust your people to do their best always, and give them the autonomy and authority they need to do great work.