

Complete the self-assessment to better understand your management style and strengths.

Fourth, we should understand that leadership is not just about doing things right; it is about doing the right things.⁶ In other words, leadership inevitably is associated with important human values, including the most fundamental values of our society. Through the process of leadership, people working together make choices about the directions they want to take; they make fundamental decisions about their futures. Such choices cannot be made simply on the basis of a rational calculation of costs and benefits. They require a careful balancing of human values. Leadership, as we will see, can play a transformational role in this process, helping people to confront important values and, indeed, helping them to grow and develop individually and collectively.

In this chapter, we consider these important and evolving issues, but we will also consider how these ideas will affect the way in which you go about trying to improve your own leadership capabilities. To get to that point, however, we need to understand first how leadership has been studied and practiced in the past; this will enable us to understand the context in which modern discussions of leadership are taking place. We will then explore the implications of these ideas for your own leadership development.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 12.1

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

Think of a person who you think is an excellent leader. This could be someone you know personally, someone you have watched from afar, or someone you have only read about or otherwise studied. It could be someone living today or someone from another time and place. What are the 10 qualities that make you think highly of that person's leadership?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Consider a specific incident in which you thought this person exercised exceptional leadership skills. Which of the preceding characteristics (or others) were most important in this particular case of leadership? Why?

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Your Experience as a Leader

Now consider your own experiences as a leader. Don't restrict yourself to times in which you were in a position of formal leadership, such as president of a student organization. Instead, consider leadership as something that everyone engages in from time to time. Think of a situation in which you *led*, even if only for a short period. Write down the circumstances in which you led:

What was it you did in this situation that caused others to follow you?

What five characteristics do you consider your best leadership qualities or traits?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

If we asked your friends to list your best leadership qualities, what do you think they would say?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
