

Emerging Leaders Northwest

Become the Director of Your Own Life: an exploration of the leadership skills you need

What You Bring To The Table:

The Unique Strengths of People with Disabilities

People with disabilities develop important critical thinking skills.

- ✓ Perseverance
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Goal Setting
- ✓ Determination
- ✓ Tolerance

10 Qualities of a Successful Leader/Director —and How to Acquire Them.

Leaders and directors don't become leaders overnight.

Even “born” leaders/directors don't start out have all of these skills.

One: Have a Vision.

- ✓ Leaders have a clear sense of where they want to go and how they intend to get there. They see the big picture then create a plan for achieving their goals.
- ✓ Learn how to build your vision.
- ✓ Talk to leaders with and without disabilities.
- ✓ Learn their secrets.
- ✓ Read books about leaders and leadership.

Two: Make decisions.

- ✓ Directors aren't afraid to make hard or unpopular decisions because they have confidence in themselves and in their abilities.
- ✓ Learn how to build your decision-making skills.
- ✓ Practice making a decision in areas where making a mistake won't make much difference to building your confidence.
- ✓ If a decision turns out to be wrong, learn from it and move on.

Three: Take Risks.

- ✓ Directors have the courage to act in situations where they are not sure if they will be successful. They are willing to risk getting things wrong.
- ✓ Learn how to take risks.
- ✓ Look at the situation
- ✓ List the pros and cons for each choice.
- ✓ Give each choice a risk factor rating from 1 to 5.

- ✓ Find out how likely that each thing will happen.
- ✓ This will help you find out how much risk you want to take.

Tip: Don't expect perfection. No one wins all the time. Leaders grow by making mistakes.

Four: Motivate others.

- ✓ Leaders can tell other people about their vision for their lives to others, convincing them of the value of their ideas. They can inspire people toward the common goals and to do things they never thought they could do.
- ✓ Learn how to get people to do things.
- ✓ Explore the different needs that get people to do things.
- ✓ Remember that the same rewards don't motivate everyone.
- ✓ Listen carefully to others to learn what gets them to do things.

Tip: Motivate others by making sure they understand how their work contributes to the plan for your life.

Five: Build Teams.

- ✓ Directors create productive teams that draw the best from people. They effectively coach teams to work together and resolve their differences.
- ✓ Learn how to improve your teambuilding skills.
- ✓ Avoid canned answers to every question.
- ✓ Concentrate on appreciating different points of view during discussions rather than just trying to prove your point.
- ✓ This same willingness to include others is the key to successful teambuilding.

Six: Know Yourself.

- ✓ People who direct their own lives know their own strengths and weaknesses and are able to view their behavior objectively. They recognize their shortcomings, open themselves to what other people say, and are willing to make changes when necessary.
- ✓ Learn about you.
- ✓ Study yourself closely
- ✓ Ask others for their opinions or criticism and what you can do to become a better leader or director of your life.

Seven: Be True to Yourself.

- ✓ Leaders must be trustworthy before others will follow them. Qualities that establish trust are caring, honesty, reliability, and feeling comfortable with yourself.

Eight: Pursue Lifelong Learning.

- ✓ People who direct their own lives have a desire to always learn and grow and are open to new ideas.
- ✓ Learn how to expand your knowledge.
- ✓ Look at the big picture.
- ✓ Look beyond your friends and what you know for ideas and inspiration.
- ✓ Read books on new leadership ideas.

Tip: Wise leaders look for partners who can do things they aren't so good at.

Nine: Communicate Effectively.

- ✓ Directors can get their ideas across to lots of different people and change their styles to meet the needs of the people they lead.
- ✓ Learn how to improve your ability to talk to others in a clear way.
- ✓ Practice listening.
- ✓ Read between the lines during conversations.

- ✓ Say important points in several ways to make sure your meaning is clear and other people understand.

Ten: Help Others Succeed.

- ✓ People who direct their own lives empower others and go out of their way to help them achieve their full potential, thereby benefiting themselves.
- ✓ Give a boost to others.
- ✓ Mentor individuals you feel are able to assume leadership roles.

--Portions adapted from "Shape of a Leader," Christine Hartelt

Contact Us: Charles Davis, Program Coordinator,
Emerging Leaders Northwest: email: davichar@ohsu.edu,
Phone: 503.494.3281

Amy Sharer (and service dog Tux), Emerging Leaders,
Emerging Leaders Northwest: email:
amy@emergingleadersnw.org

Check out our website at emergingleadersnw.org!