



## *Goshen on Leadership*

Several years ago I had the pleasure of having John Maxwell speak for a leadership dinner. He is an outstanding speaker and has written many books on leadership. At the dinner, he gave a simple definition of leadership: "*Influencing others.*" I thought—how simple and to the point. However, over the years I have created my own definition that I wish to share:

**Leadership is the positive, progressive, ethical influence on others.**

Let me begin by sharing three examples of "influence." Kay and I just returned from a marvelous cruise. We were told the ship we were aboard had a weight of over 30,000 tons. As we sailed home on our final night, we encountered twelve-foot waves and high winds. It was remarkable to think that a very small *rudder* was keeping us on course.

I will never forget our beautiful, pure white Arabian stallion. He was outstanding. However, he presented a challenge. Each time I entered the barn, he would lay his ears back, snarl his gums, and flare his nostrils as if he were saying, "You want some of this?" Being the true horseman that I am, I did what any wise person would do; I called Kay. She was amazing. She would walk directly in front of him, tell him to "save it," put a lead rope around his neck, and then slip a tiny little piece of metal called a *bit* into his mouth. Astonishing! That tiny bit took 1600 pounds of fire and rage and turned him into an obedient horse.

In Oklahoma, we have had the worst year for grass fires since 1920. At last count, over 60,000 acres have burned. It was reported in the news that the majority of the fires have been ignited by a *tiny stick* weighing less than one ounce—a cigarette.

Knowing that a small *rudder* can control direction; a small piece of metal called a bit can create a different temperament; and a *tiny stick* of paper can create fire, we must realize what a tiny part of our body called the *tongue* is capable of doing. We have a choice as leaders to use the tongue to build up or destroy others, to use our influence positively or negatively.

The one who holds the position of leadership and wishes to be effective must be positive. That person must be engaged in the process of *edification* or *building up*. A positive leader will be an *optimist* and will demonstrate the *confidence* that *inspires* others to be all they can be.

In my lifetime, the greatest example of a positive attitude was our 40th President, Ronald Reagan. He made us believe not only in ourselves but also in our country. A good leader must be *positive*.

A leader must be *progressive*. You can not stand on the sideline and expect respect from your team. Will Rogers, a political humorist and one of Oklahoma's famous sons, put it this way, "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Today, if you want to create respect and trust from an organization, you must be doing as well as teaching. There is an old saying that states "Those who can't do will teach." If you are going to be a respected leader, you must always be moving. As leaders, our job is not to create *followers*, but leaders. Stay *progressive*, setting the example in all areas.

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**As a member of the National Speakers Association, Bob has been invited to corporations and organizations to speak on the subject's of Marketing and Leadership. For additional information on Bob Goshen go to [www.bobgoshen.com](http://www.bobgoshen.com) or email [bob@bobgoshen.com](mailto:bob@bobgoshen.com).**



Today's leader must be *ethical*. As I have expanded this definition of leadership, I am more confident than ever that ethics are the *glue* that holds an organization together. If our definition of a leader is simply "influencing others," then it would follow that Hitler, and even more recently Ken Lay of Enron, were leaders. But leadership is more than influencing people; it must be carried out *ethically*. Many employees are going to work every day feeling abused by their manager or boss due to poor ethics. Someone who has been placed in a leadership position has violated their trust by a lack of *ethics*.

A leader must do the following if he or she would *create* and *stabilize* an organization:

- Keep your word
- Listen to others
- Be slow to anger

As leaders, we have been given a position of responsibility, the biggest being to create an environment that allows people to realize their dreams. If we have been granted the position of "influencing others," let's do it *positively, progressively, and ethically*.

Leadership is not *rocket science*, but it is *people science*.

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