

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Leadership may be a common catchword these days but it's important for anyone to strive to be a leader, regardless of what role you have or your age.

In fact, it's important to encourage young people to be leaders.

Blogger Joseph LaLonde's focus is on helping young people do just that. And in a recent post on his site (jmlalonde.com), he highlights 19 traits that could benefit leaders of all ages.

These traits are not just for leaders in the strict sense of organizational leadership. They are for "leaders" of all types: teachers, parents, students — anyone who wants to improve their capacity to lead.

LaLonde highlights 19 traits. They all make sense but I'm going to focus on a few that especially speak to me.

LaLonde says that leaders must help their team grow through coaching. This doesn't mean pushing people but guiding them. I spent a number of years in organized sports and my best coaches encouraged me.

In my job, I try to apply that same approach with my staff members.

Also important is relationship building. LaLonde writes, "Great leaders connect with people on an emotional and personal level."

I see coaching and relationship building as two legs of a three-legged stool. They go together to create a foundation that fosters leadership.

The third leg is effective communication. Without that, it's difficult for coaching and relationship building to take place.

"Your team will struggle to move forward if you haven't communicated the direction you have for them. Learn how to communicate your organization's goals," LaLonde writes.

And just as it's important to communicate, it's



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"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

also crucial to listen.

Listening to those around you may give you a different understanding of a situation. And it also lets your team know that you are interested in what they have to say.

Another trait that LaLonde cites is integrity. It's hard to be perceived as a leader if people can't trust you.

"People will trust leaders who have integrity and be willing to follow them places they normally wouldn't go. Be a leader with integrity," LaLonde writes.

LaLonde lists 19 traits at www.jmlalonde.com/19-leadership-traits-to-focus-on-in-2019/ and I've cited only a few. But another trait that resonates with me is to always keep learning.

As a leader, it's important to grow so that you can help those around you grow, too.

The great sculptor, painter, architect and poet Michelangelo inscribed, "I am still learning" on a sketch at the age of 87. If he can, so can we.

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