

Ten Characteristics of a Naturally Effective Leader

By Gayla Hodges, President and Principal, Change Agents, Inc.

Becoming a naturally effective leader does not depend upon your ability to emulate the behaviors and attitudes of the “great leaders” you read about in books. Becoming a naturally effective leader simply requires you to stop trying to be someone else or some combination of other people. Naturally Effective Leaders begin by being themselves.

Natural Effectiveness™ Coaching, as uniquely practiced by Change Agents, Inc., will define the way you work most efficiently and effectively and position you to leverage your natural strengths to meet your goals. The result is tremendous power to lead, achieve and develop. Naturally effective leaders, by definition, will not all engage in the same behaviors, or necessarily share the same core competencies. There are, however, certain identifiable characteristics shared by naturally effective leaders.

The characteristics of a naturally effective leader will not necessarily be behaviors or competencies as these are usually defined. These characteristics can be grouped under two essential traits. First, they have a vision; second, they work from their point of effectiveness.

They have a vision:

1. Naturally Effective leaders have a vision. They know where they want to go and they know how to share that vision to inspire others. These leaders can see where the organization or the team needs to go before others do so. They have the ability to look at the big picture, not only inside the organization, but outside as well, to formulate an energizing vision to move the organization forward. They also have the ability to clearly define or paint a picture of the future that inspires others. A naturally effective leader must be clear on his/her vision. Because they share that vision with others through their natural style, it makes a more powerful impact. Some naturally effective leaders lead through their *take charge traits*; some lead through their ability to *draw people* to themselves, perhaps through charisma; some lead through the strength of *patience*, taking a calm and patient approach to the vision that still engages because it gives people time to absorb the ideas; and *high conformity* types lead through structure.

2. Naturally Effective leaders focus on achieving the goals that will make their vision into reality. Naturally effective leaders do what makes sense to them, and it works. This is because they have used their natural strengths to evaluate the capabilities of their organization and work from both their own strength and the strengths of the organization.

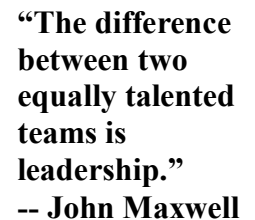
“Give people a possibility to live into, not an expectation to live up to.”

-- Ben Zander

- 3. Naturally Effective leaders win support for their vision by utilizing the style and activity that is most appropriate for them as individuals.** They understand that when they are in the naturally effective *zone*, it works better for them as well as for the organization. They understand that when behavior is patterned on someone else, the individual and the organization are being put under stress constantly.

They work from their point of effectiveness:

- 4. Naturally Effective leaders are more focused on being than doing. They are centered enough within themselves that they naturally lead.** These individuals have taken the time to truly know themselves, often working with a coach. They have a solid self-awareness and they use it to the advantage of the organization.
- 5. Naturally Effective leaders know how they work most efficiently and most effectively.** They have learned from both their successes and failures, they have honed their skills, and they have integrated their experiences, skills, competencies and self-awareness into an effective and efficient presence.
- 6. Naturally Effective leaders know how to leverage their strengths to accomplish goals.** They focus on the goals that will make their vision a reality. They have the ability to zero in on the actions that provide the most direct route to achievement of the goals.
- 7. Naturally Effective leaders do not try to be someone else. They understand that it works for them when they are at their best.** Because they know who they are, how they work most efficiently and effectively, and are comfortable within themselves, they do not feel the need to pattern themselves upon the models of others, no matter how effective those people are as leaders.
- 8. Naturally Effective leaders seek out people with different natural effectiveness traits.** They value the complementary skills and traits of others. Not only do these leaders value others, they depend on others to fill in their blanks. They surround themselves with people whose strengths complement their own. **They would agree with John Maxwell when he indicated that**
- 9. Naturally Effective leaders attract others.** These are the leaders people want to work for and with because they get things done with a minimum of stress on the people around them and on the organization. People want to be on their teams; they want them as their mentors.



**“The difference between two equally talented teams is leadership.”
-- John Maxwell**

10. Naturally Effective leaders continue to develop their strengths in order to meet new needs and achieve new goals. These leaders are active learners. They agree with John Maxwell when indicated that focusing on strengths is more productive than trying to bolster your weaknesses. These leaders understand that strengths build upon themselves while trying to improve weaknesses achieves only incremental growth.

When a leader truly knows himself or herself and embraces their own personal style of naturally effective leadership, they tap into hidden reserves and release tremendous power, not only to envision the future, but to lead others in accomplishing the goals that will make that vision reality.

About Gayla Hodges

Gayla Hodges is the President and Principal Consultant of Change Agents, Inc. of Arizona, a company that specializes in energizing workforces to achieve strategic goals. She has extensive experience in instituting corporate transformational change. She coaches executives and managers on leading corporate change, facilitating the development and implementation of organizational effectiveness strategies and leadership development through Natural Effectiveness™ coaching. For more information, visit www.changeagentsinc.com or call 623-362-3876.