

# Leadership TRACKS

ISSUE NO. 4

## The Best Leadership Training—and It's FREE!

Dr. Dan Maltby

### Are Leaders Born or Made? ANSWER: Yes!

The current consensus is that good leaders are a little of **both**. In the majority of cases, inherited traits, birth order, and early family experiences play a significant role in establishing and developing the personality and the character needs that motivate an individual to lead. These factors also contribute to the development of the intellectual and interpersonal skills essential to effective leadership.

**But...** LIFE contributes greatly to the development of a leader! Work experiences, hardships, challenges, opportunities, education, mentors and role models – all add significantly to the equation of leadership effectiveness.

### Don't Knock "Hard Knocks" Learning...

Current research (and consensus by those producing it) suggests that experiences on the job play an important catalytic role in unlocking leader behavior. There seems to be no substitute for learning through doing, making mistakes and improving with time. John Kotter surveyed 200 executives at highly successful companies and interviewed 12 key individuals in depth. Kotter's research suggests some things that you can do to be more intentional and strategic about your own leadership growth and development. Try this list of practical ideas...

**1 – Pick the Right Place.** All opportunities are NOT created equal. Some places, workgroups, divisions, departments are better than others. HOW? They offer more challenging assignments,

better colleagues, broader exposure, and more effective "coaching" by superiors. Keep all these things in mind when you go looking for a place to "land."

**2 – Find the Right Person.** I'm talking about mentors and role models. Work for a boss who demonstrates good leadership – someone who can help you learn to do the same! Take the initiative to build relationships with mentors who can help you learn from *their* experiences; overcome *your* blind spots; avoid leadership "land mines" (career-killing mistakes); and help you "steer" your career onto a path of promotion and upward mobility.

**3 – Swallow That Frog.** Volunteer for the tough jobs that everyone else avoids. It's a no-lose venture. To begin with, you will be doing exactly what you need to do to grow and learn – you will be "broadening" your leadership experience with a challenging assignment. But... even if you do a so-so job, everyone will be singing your praises. Why? Because you took the job that no one else wanted! Finally... you will create instant visibility for your leadership, and that's important – because people don't promote what they don't notice!

**4 – Join a Big-League Team.** Join a task force that's taking on a special assignment. You will win in several ways – you will learn stuff outside the "box" of your limited job assignment; you will work with colleagues who will expose you to their gifts, skills, and strengths; you will be more likely to succeed (and less likely to fail) by sharing the

assignment with others; and... *you will be noticed!* (Most task forces are given high-profile assignments from top brass!)

**5 – Let Management Pick Up the Tab.** Most companies offer training opportunities or incentives of some kind. Take advantage of them! Here's an important caveat, though:

*Not all training opportunities are created equal!*

How do you spot the good ones from the not-so-good ones? That's a topic for a future issue of *Leadership Tracks* - stay tuned for more good advice!

This edition of *Leadership Tracks* has been adapted from a more detailed article, which includes additional references and sources. You can find this article at the following link:

<http://thebosdoctor.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Leaders-Born-or-Made.pdf>

And use *this* link for a free personal planning form, to help you apply the ideas in this issue:

<http://thebosdoctor.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PTRAIN04.pdf>

**Leadership Tracks** is a resource for growing leaders edited by Dr. Jim Dyke, the Founder and Director of **Corporate Leadership Initiatives, Inc.**—an organization dedicated to equipping men and women with skills and principles pertinent to the role and life of a transformational leader of the 21st century. For more information, you can log on to the website at: **www.CLionline.com** and connect with additional practical and creative resources.

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