

7 Best Practices for a Best-Self Leader

1. **“Be, know, and do” as a true professional.** Prepare character and competence for empowerment in current and anticipated roles instead of wait to be called. Inspire preparation and action from others through your example of life leadership and professional development. Write your plan for the *7 Areas of Life*, including *Professional*. Internalize callings and choices to exhibit more commitment, character, and courage to increase confidence, connection, and charisma to attract and encourage others. Learn and internalize principles and best practices to *plan and lead your life*.
2. **Design a Best-Self Servant Leadership Organization.** Plan mission, vision, goals, actions, and assessments rewarding desired results for the *7 Areas to Plan, Assess, and Reward* to focus on the important for *significance* as well as *success*: 1) *opportunity*; 2) *service*; 3) *rewards*; 4) *professional development*; 5) *people development*; 6) *organizational development*; 7) *societal service*. Aim to achieve a *triple-win with stewardship* for mission, stakeholders, and resources.
3. **Put processes in place to reward desired behavior** – write and communicate plans, best practices, and reward system to attract stakeholders who match and encourage desired actions and results. Focus beyond the short-term influence of personality to answer what actions and results get rewarded. *Work with the willing* and reward those who provide plans aligned to inspire and guide them toward mission, vision, values, performance criteria, and needed change. Use organizational structure to communicate synergistic teamwork links and career opportunities. Design, teach, and use vital processes for priorities and your unique services.
4. **State intent, expectations, and parameters directly and positively to encourage initiative.** Communicate plans and rewards because without clarity, many avoid risk and wait for direction – often without communicating their hesitation. Direction, boundaries, and rules boost initiative instead of restrict it – an often misunderstood paradox – they provide a framework to *go for it* your way within shared vision. The greater the number of people involved and separation from them, the greater the need to state clearly and consistently.

5. **Teach, show, and encourage people to earn empowerment.** Communicate what you need to feel trust in attitude and ability to move from 1) telling, teaching, and directing to 2) coaching and supporting to 3) delegating and empowering. Empowerment requires developed trust of others – not blind delegation – because moving from telling to empowering without coaching creates risk and leads to frustration and conflict. To achieve complex goals in unpredictable circumstances, prepare to increasingly cede control to those closest to the action. Reward those who state their intent through plans for action to achieve shared vision for values, results, and earning responsibility so you can *operate more like a mentor than a manager*. Increase empowerment as you – and they – grow in maturity to expand scope of responsibilities. Explain *why* they should and can succeed to boost commitment and confidence. Simplify plans and communications so direction can be duplicated to achieve success with minimal mistakes and conflicts.
6. **Prepare for increasing complexities and conflicts as you increase responsibility, power and influence.** Broaden learning about stakeholders and societies, plus communicating in diverse environments as you mature and progress in the *7 Levels of Leadership*: 1) *Personal*; 2) *7 Ares of Life*; 3) *Interpersonal*; 4) *Team*; 5) *Managerial*; 6) *Organizational*; 7) *Societal*. Grow capacities of strategic thinking, synthesizing, and decision-making. Decide if you are *wired to lead* under increased stress and accountability. Understand how complexity, ambiguity, conflict, and competitive ambition of some grow as scope of leadership expands. Discern if you are called to be principally a producer or a servant leader and if your callings are strong enough to sustain commitment over time to provide “glue” for the organization when *under stress*.
7. **Stand strong to do “the harder right” even before embraced by the masses.** Be willing to be *ahead of your time* with improved ways of thinking and doing for organizational strategy and people development. Support early believers. Persist long enough for skeptics to catch up with your vision and see benefits. Discern how much and how fast the people can absorb new beliefs or accept temporary *negative reactions to your prescribed medicine*. Be a change agent, even if results will come after your time – regardless of who gets credit.