



Lessons Learned from a Leader

In his book entitled “Leadership” Rudy Giuliani outlines eight principles that make up a great leader. In today’s environment, with so much talk about leadership in the news and business boardrooms, it was interesting to hear first hand what this leader had to say about the topic. The eight principles outlined by Mr. Giuliani will not surprise the avid reader of leadership and management materials, but the story behind the book was quite inspirational.

The idea of writing a book had long been on the agenda for Rudy Giuliani even before he was Mayor of New York City. His first attempt at writing was halted by the discovery of prostate cancer. It was halted a second time due to the devastating attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th 2001. As difficult as these events were for both Mr. Giuliani’s personal life and our nation as a whole, they became the inspiration for the consulting practice he formed in 2002, and later for his book “Leadership.”

It is obvious that Mr. Giuliani embodies the very principles that he speaks of in his book. His view on leadership is both from the personal (self-awareness) and the organizational (social awareness) perspective. Throughout his book he uses references for both perspectives. Mr. Giuliani believes that leaders are made, which correlates strongly with the teachings of many leadership theories - including Emotional Intelligence. The principles that Mr. Giuliani shares with us can find their way into both your personal and professional lives and, when seriously considered, can have life changing effects. The principles are as follows:

1. Develop & Communicate Strong Beliefs
2. Be Optimistic
3. Be Courageous
4. Be Ethical
5. Prepare Relentlessly
6. Understand Teamwork
(surround yourself with great people)
7. Be A Good Communicator
8. Have A Sense Of Humor

All of these principles have application to coaching. However, as a coach I see most of my clients requesting support around principles 1, 2, 3 and 6.

In principle 1, Mr. Giuliani states that when you develop and communicate strong beliefs they act as a foundation. Developing and communicating strong beliefs is a critical distinction between strong versus weak leadership. He emphasizes this principle with an example: If a leader polled their supporters to make every decision, they would not be leading, but following.

Principle 2 builds on strong beliefs and affords the leader the opportunity to look optimistically upon any situation that emerges. Mr. Giuliani sees optimistic leaders as having a future orientation and possessing the ability to think success for both themselves and their organizations. Optimistic leaders are problem solvers that follow hopes, dreams and solutions.

Principle 3 addresses the need to manage fear. Mr. Giuliani defines courage as the management of fear and sees healthy fear as the critical moment when you are able confront what you don’t know and begin to do something about it. This principle is very well illustrated. Fear manifests itself in obvious things like failure and the unknown, but also can be found in areas such as success.

Finally, principle 6 prepares a leader to identify the right talent to surround them. He defines teamwork from a self awareness perspective and emphasizes that you must know your strengths and weaknesses in order to construct a strong team. Clients continually inquire as to how to better manage relationships with others as a way of improving effectiveness. The main takeaway here is realizing the necessity to let go in order to move ahead.

Mr. Giuliani’s principles of leadership are evident throughout his career, which quite frankly makes him a good authority on the topic. His passion for leadership is seen through his accomplishments both politically and professionally. So what is next for this dynamic leader? When asked if he would run for president in 2008, he deflected the answer by saying it was too early to think of such an idea. When pressured again, however, he said he had not ruled it out.

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