

Leaders Who Gather Followers v Leaders Who Develop Leaders

Leaders who develop followers grow their organisation only one person at a time. But leaders who develop leaders multiple their growth, because for every leader they develop, they also receive all of that leader's followers.

Add ten followers to your organisation, and you have the power of ten people. Add ten leaders to your organisation, and you have the power of ten leaders times all the followers and leaders they influence. That's the difference between addition and multiplication. It's like growing your organisation by teams instead of by individuals.

1. Leaders who gather followers need to be needed; leaders who develop leaders want to be succeeded.

Many who desire to lead followers do so because followers stroke their egos. They feel indispensable. But leaders who develop leaders work to make themselves dispensable. They don't want a following, but a legacy.

2. Leaders who gather followers focus on people's weaknesses; leaders who develop leaders focus on their strengths.

Ineffective leaders focus on their followers' weaknesses, sometimes out of misunderstanding the way development and encouragement work, other times because of insecurity – they want to keep their followers off-balance. But strong leaders focus on their people's strengths because they know that is the key to developing people.

3. Leaders who gather followers focus on the bottom 20 percent; leaders who develop leaders focus on the top 20 percent.

Leaders of emerging leaders focus on the best in their leaders; they also focus on the best potential leaders. In contrast, leaders of followers usually give their attention to the loudest and most difficult people, the ones who take and take, giving nothing in return.

4. Leaders who gather followers treat everyone the same; leaders who develop leaders treat people as individuals.

Leaders of leaders treat each person according to their talents and willingness to grow.

5. Leaders who gather followers spend their time; leaders who develop leaders invest their time.

Leaders of leaders view their work with emerging leaders as a wise investment.

6. Leaders who gather followers ask for little commitment; leaders who develop leaders ask for great commitment.

Following a leader takes commitment. But it's nothing compared to the commitment of a follower who is asked to lead others. As you ask people to step up to leadership, don't treat your request lightly. Let them know to what you are asking them to commit. Acquaint them with the sacrifice and the service that come with leadership.

7. Leaders who gather followers impact this generation; leaders who develop leaders impact future generations.

People who lead followers impact only the individuals whose lives they touch personally. But people who develop and lead leaders extend their reach.

It takes a good leader to gather a group of followers and lead them to achieve a worthy goal. But it takes a great leader to lead other leaders – and that's the only kind of leader who can take an organisation to the highest level of achievement.

(Adapted from John C Maxwell - The Maxwell Leadership Bible NKJV 2002)

*See also the book 'Good to Great: Why some companies make the leap...and others don't' by Jim Collins