

Lisa Lewis:

Welcome to Let go. Lean in. My podcast, designed with transformational leaders like you in mind. I'm Lisa Lewis, your transformational leadership coach.

Lisa Lewis:

In each episode, you'll find help growing awareness of your mindset as a leader, be equipped with a tool to let go of unrealistic expectations and self-limiting beliefs that get in the way of your one precious life. My goal is for you to thrive as you lean in toward the leadership call God has put on your life. Join me and other leaders as we let go and lean in together. Welcome to another episode of Let go, lean in, your transformational leadership podcast.

Lisa Lewis:

I'm excited to talk with you today about what it means to be a leader. I know so many women who do not see themselves as leaders. I also know women who are in leadership positions who don't step forward into their full authority and opportunity as a leader. So today, we're going to take a look at 10 characteristics of what many people consider effective leadership.

Lisa Lewis:

Now for a long time, leadership was thought to be based on a charismatic personality, a person who could command attention as well as be an effective communicator. Well, over the years of research and study, many different universities taking a look at different aspects of leadership, have found that there are these data points that identify these particular 10 characteristics. After I read them, I'm going to break them into three categories, four, four and two. What I'm hoping that you will do is hear yourself in a variety of these characteristics. We all can possess all 10 but we usually have some that need development, hence, transformational leadership.

Lisa Lewis:

So here we go. You know you're a leader when you have at least three of the following characteristics, integrity, ability to delegate, good communication skills, self-awareness, gratitude, learning agility, influence, empathy, courage and respect. Now, I mentioned I wanted to put those in categories and I see them in three separate categories, two belong together as core components of a good leader and those two are integrity and courage.

Lisa Lewis:

Why those two together as core components? Well, first of all, to be a person of integrity means that what you say is what you're going to do and you are the same person, whether you are at work, with your family or by yourself. As a leader, the persona that you project to your people needs to be the same in those three areas. And you and I all have run into individuals who do not have good integrity. So, integrity is one of those core values.

Lisa Lewis:

The second one is courage and the word courage is all about the heart. In fact, the root word of courage is heart. And so, to take courage or to have courage means that you are willing to take a risk and step forward, which is what a leader does. So, integrity and courage are core components of good leadership.

Now, the other eight characteristics, I think, can go into two other categories, one, skills and the other emotional intelligence.

Lisa Lewis:

Now, you can study all about emotional intelligence. In fact, Daniel Goleman wrote a very good book called "Emotional Intelligence" and that will unpack for you what are the components of emotional intelligence and how to develop it. But let's start with the four characteristics of good leadership, good, effective leadership that I see as coming under emotional intelligence.

Lisa Lewis:

The first one is self-awareness, the second one is gratitude, the third, empathy and the fourth respect. Now, why do I talk about those as being in the category of emotional intelligence? Well, first of all, a person that has high emotional intelligence also has high self-awareness. Now, this is not being aware of yourself and being concerned about how you look in front of group or how you present in the outfit that you chose to wear to the particular meeting.

Lisa Lewis:

Self-awareness is being able to know your strengths and your weaknesses and have a humble posture about those, recognizing you have places that you can grow. So, a person with high self-awareness can then also recognize empathy, feeling with other people. When somebody on your team is struggling because of issues at home, you as a leader, expressing empathy, are going to be able to put yourself in their shoes and recognize they need some more care, attention, perhaps a lightening of their load, if at all possible, and being with them in the sense of recognizing the struggle that they're going through and wanting to help that teammate feel, seen and heard and supported, that's empathy.

Lisa Lewis:

In fact, there's a great graphic illustration that Brene Brown's work has put together and it's available on YouTube. So, I'll make sure there's a link to that particular definition between sympathy and empathy. It's so well done, quite impactful. The third characteristic under emotional intelligence is gratitude. This is a characteristic of effective leadership. Why? Well, you have people that are following you and if you don't express gratitude for the work that they're doing, for the time that they're investing, for the sacrifices that they're making, for the creativity that they're employing, your people will find another place to work.

Lisa Lewis:

So, part of being a good leader is being able to express gratitude for a job well done. Not simply, "Hey, thanks. That's great," but truly practicing gratitude on an ongoing basis. Making time on a daily, weekly, monthly, semi-annual, an annual basis to applaud the work that your team is putting forth. Expressing and practicing gratitude keeps you as a leader in tune with your people.

Lisa Lewis:

And the last of the four characteristics under emotional intelligence as I see it is respect. Respect has two parts, respecting your team as a whole and respecting the individuals. You also are going to be respecting yourself in that as well. And perhaps on a larger scale, respecting your organization. Now,

that takes a lot of different forms. You will be respectful in the way that you speak to them, with them and about them. Now, practicing respect goes along with having high emotional intelligence.

Lisa Lewis:

You get to know your people, everybody has different needs. If you are aware of the people that are on your team, you're going to be paying attention to what teammate has a high need for independence, autonomy. You'll also be paying attention to a teammate who wants to have more of a group interactive kind of workspace. So, respecting the individual and the team and your organization are all nuanced issues that you need to pay attention to as a leader. That's why I put respect in the category of emotional intelligence.

Lisa Lewis:

You might assume you're going to do it anyway, but unless you are attentive to each of these four characteristics under the category of emotional intelligence, you are not going to be effective in your leadership. Self-awareness, gratitude, empathy, and respect. Now remember, those four come under in my humble opinion, two core values of leadership, which is integrity and courage.

Lisa Lewis:

So, you might be a leader when you possess those six characteristics. Not one of them talks about being able to stand up in front of a group and make people laugh. Not one of them talks about having a commanding presence. These characteristics of leadership often are neglected. But as research has been showing, transformational leaders are the ones who not only have these characteristics, but pay attention to developing them in the people on their teams.

Lisa Lewis:

Why? So, that there is an active development of future leaders. Transformational leadership is about succession planning, you're investing in future leaders by your model and intentionally paying attention to those types of characteristics that I've listed. There are four more characteristics to make up that total 10. Now, this is a lot of information and yet the whole reason that I wanted to go through these 10 is to really have you listen for things that the characteristics that you already possess.

Lisa Lewis:

If you begin to see yourself rightly as a person of influence, then you are going to be more effective wherever you are. Leadership isn't authoritarian, that is not effective leadership. That's not on the list. Transformational leadership is all about being with and modeling these 10 characteristics. I've gotten so excited talking about all these characteristics of a leader that I didn't realize how much time I'd spent already telling you about them.

Lisa Lewis:

So, sorry. My commitment to you is to keep these episodes short and to the point. So, instead of going on to the last category with the final four leadership characteristics, I'm going to push pause here and create a second episode so that you can listen to a bit of review before you hear the last four. Sound like a good idea? I think so. Less than 20 minutes is a good amount of time when you are getting so many other things information-wise and desiring for your time. Let's keep it short and sweet. So, thanks for being here for the first half of 10 characteristics of a leader.

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