

Becoming a Great Leader

Lesson 4-7: Competence

Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

One Word Check-in

Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

“Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.” 2 Corinthians 3:4-5 (NIV)

Competent leaders combine their skills and values in a unique way that naturally creates committed followers. There is not a cookie-cutter formula for being a leader, but below are traits that all competent leaders share.

The foundation of competent leadership is a strong value system. A proper value system allows you to take the stress out of making decisions, because you made the decision long ago that you would not violate your values. As an example, a trustworthy leader would never fudge the financials or shortchange a client. As the leader’s reputation of character grows, this creates more followers. Sometimes people possess an extremely high skill level, but their moral or value system is self-centered. They attract followers, but, in almost all situations, this type of person will eventually fail, losing their followers. Just keep in mind that character is built over time but can be lost in a minute.

Competent leadership is developed through learning and experience. The volume of books and seminars discussing leadership is endless. The obvious conclusion is people want to be better leaders and that companies need better leaders. Sometimes the best learning experience is being throw into the fire of a challenging situation. You will make some mistakes, but this experience gives you wisdom for the future.

Competent leaders get things done. The mission of every organization is to get its goals accomplished while being financially viable. It is the leader’s job to make sure this happens. The leader must make decisions on incomplete information using their experience and the help of others. A leader must be patient but not a procrastinator.

Competent leaders are empowering, not micromanagers. A leader must clearly communicate a task or project for others to implement. There must be thought energy by the leader to define what success looks like so that the team clearly knows what it must accomplish and why it is important. The “what” and the “why” are of equal importance. Once this is established, the leader needs to get out of the way to let the team go to work (see example on page two).

Competent leaders create other competent leaders. The ultimate test of a leader is whether he/she invests time and energy to help others grow in their leadership. If a leader does not create other leaders, it means that the leader is self-centered and solely focused on his/her own pursuits. You can learn more about this in [Turn the Ship Around!](#) by David Marquet (see page two).

Shared Experiences:

- Can someone share how their spirituality finds expression in their leadership? Specifically, in your attitude about work and people, staff, peers, customers, vendors, etc.
- Another test of good leadership is the quality of relationships built with others. How would you categorize your relationships with people at work?
- Be specific. Do people follow you because of your leadership or because of your position?
- Can you share what is the one thing you must improve to become a more competent leader?
- Likewise, what is your biggest struggle in being a leader?

Bottom line: Highly competent leaders possess the skills and experience that bring unique value to their organization. This comes from their competence of understanding how people and processes serve its customers and the overall direction of the company. Jesus empowered twelve uneducated people to change the world. And they did.

One Word Check-out

Dig Deeper

Want to learn more?

- *Video:* [Love & Profit: The Caring Confrontation](#) by James Autry
- *Video:* [How to Be a Great Leader with lessons from David Marquet](#) by Simon Sinek
- *Video:* [Turn the Ship Around!](#) David Marquet, Former Captain and U.S. Navy Seal
- *Article:* [Character and Competence in Leaders](#) by Boyd Bailey. Competence gives a leader respect, while character sustains their credibility.
- *Article:* [Section 5: Army Core Leader Competencies](#) U.S. Army Leadership Track

Competent leaders are empowering, not micromanagers (continued). The following is the ultimate in empowerment; people's lives are at stake. If the military sees the value of empowerment, surely we can figure it out in our businesses.

The U.S. military does an extensive amount of planning for any war or battle. As an example, on D-Day in World War II, 6,000 ships participated in the landing of 165,000 troops in the first 24-hours of the battle. Thousands of planes bombed the coastal defenses and 20,000 troops dropped behind enemy lines. They built floating concrete structures that were towed across the English Channel and sunk to create artificial harbors for transporting troops and supplies. Within eight days they brought trains across on ships.

But when the military encounters the enemy's fighting force, plans must change on the fly. The U.S. has developed a military strategy called "Commanders Intent." It is an empowering document giving companies and platoons of soldiers the flexibility to modify the plan based on the overall intent of the commanders.

The "[Commander's Intent](#)" states the end state of the battlefield as it relates to his force, the enemy force, and the terrain. Additionally, it may also include:

- The purpose of the operations
- The enemy's actions and intentions
- An identification of the enemy's critical vulnerability or center of gravity

Some soul-searching questions for you to ponder about your leadership:

- Do you treat people the way you want to be treated?
- Would people at work believe that you want what is best for them?
- How would the last person you fired describe you?
- Would people around you say that you take the blame when things go wrong and deflect credit to others when things go well?
- How many times per day do you use the word "I" versus the word "we?"