

Leadership- A person or persons responsible for the organization, operation, and guidance of others and/or his environment.

While my definition is brief, I feel that the ideas encompassed within it are immense. Organization is much more than simply assigning someone to a position. If someone is to be a good leader, he needs to take the time to know his subordinates as individuals as well as workers. That knowledge and understanding of his people as a whole will help that leader to apply each worker's skills in the most beneficial and effective way.

Operation, closely related to organization, considers the actual workings of a company or organization. Leaders not only need to make sure that each person is assigned to an appropriate position, but they also need to be aware of exactly what positions there are and how they must be run within the overall system. Again, much knowledge here is necessary. Knowledge and understanding of what an organization stands for, where it is, and where it is headed must be effectively combined with knowledge of the individuals who will be given the responsibility to create or continue positive ends .

Guidance in the leadership position is essential. To effectively lead others, a leader must have the ability to recognize strength, as well as weaknesses, in his workers. If there is weakness, the leader is one who should guide that worker either by sharing of his own knowledge on a subject, or by connecting that worker to someone else who has the knowledge that can enhance that worker's performance. Again, a leader knowing and understanding the people who work under him is vital to helping those individuals better themselves, which in turn will better the company or organization.

In trying to extend my definition of leadership to encompass "shared leadership", I have come up with the idea that although one person may be in the "formal leadership" role, assigning the individuals within a company or organization to tasks that best fit their strengths and talents really becomes "shared leadership". Because the leader is entrusting his subordinates to do their jobs well based on knowledge of each person as an individual, the leader is actually sharing his leadership by sharing his responsibilities with people he feels will be good at those tasks. I guess I feel that one person can't be responsible for all leadership duties, so a good "shared leadership" environment is one in which everyone's strengths are acknowledged, weaknesses are recognized and overcome, and people are placed in positions within that organization where they can create the most growth and good.

As I try to make sense of all of my thoughts here, I feel that there is so very much I have left out. The words patience, kindness, respect, and acceptance were all meant to be in my definition, but I will just have to let myself feel that all of those qualities are enveloped by my brief definition. Those are the qualities that I feel a good leader needs. It is those qualities, mixed with the sense of duty to guide his organization and staff, that would make a leader whole.

