



### **WINNING QUALITY # 3: A Leader Should Have Strength of Character.**

According to John C. Maxwell, author of *Leadership 101* and *Developing the Leaders around You*, the first thing to look for in any kind of leader or potential leader is strength of character. "I have found nothing more important than this quality," he said.

First, we need to define character. D. L. Moody said, "Character is what you are in the dark." What Moody meant by this is that character is what you really are when no one is looking, not the cover-up that you allow others to see. Character is what guides your actions and produces the words you speak. Character is your unique identity, your personality, the sum total of your individual characteristics.

Character can be good or bad. Strength of character refers to the strong and good character. A person strong in character is someone who stands for what is right, who has the "backbone" to express and live out his convictions.

What are the qualities that make up good character? These include honesty, integrity, devotion, self-discipline, determination, dependability, perseverance, conscientiousness, patience, and a strong work ethic. A person with right character does what he says, and says what he does. His reputation is solid. He respects himself, his family, and his nation.

As there is no perfect person in the world, all of us lack a few strong qualities mentioned above. It should not be ignored for, according to Maxwell, serious character flaws will eventually make a leader ineffective – every time.

Hence, if you notice any of the following characteristics and behaviors below, you might be losing your potential to be an effective leader:

- not being able to do the tasks given to you
- undone obligations and broken promises
- not taking responsibility for your actions
- failure to meet deadlines and making tons of excuses
- being oversensitive to criticisms and comments

Start taking control of your actions and develop the right strength of character. Although character flaws cannot be changed overnight, it can be changed through right practice and attitude.

### **Bringing Out that Strong Character in You**

You don't want to be the weak link that will disentangle the chain that binds your team, do you? Being the leader, you should be the one with the strong character that your people would imitate. Be their role model and show them who the real boss is!

- 1. Believe in yourself.** Before you expect anybody else to believe in you, you should be the first person to believe in who you are and in what you can do. Look at and see yourself the way you want others to see you. If you want others to respect you, learn to respect yourself. If you want others to love you, love yourself first. Focus on the things you do well and try to develop those you are not good at.
- 2. Engage in training.** Practice makes perfect. Even if you think it is helpless for you to possess a quality you never really have, by constantly engaging yourself in situations necessary to observe such quality, you will eventually realize that you are slowly achieving it. For instance, if you know you lack patience (but since patience is needed

to strengthen your character and you need to develop it), exercise it by falling in long lines, waiting to be served in restaurants, etc.

- 3. Develop mental toughness.** No one can lead without getting criticisms or without facing discouragement from other people. A potential leader needs mental toughness for such threatening situations. A tough-minded leader sees things as they are and knows how to adjust when needed. Ask authorized persons to criticize your work constantly. Treat criticisms as constructive, and learn from mistakes. Never be oversensitive.
- 4. Follow right examples.** Even leaders need a model. Get to know people with strong qualities. Make friends and blend with them. When you have chosen a person who possesses something you always wanted to have, you will emulate what he is doing in order to be like him.
- 5. Display integrity.** Leaders must possess qualities such as honesty, uprightness, and trustworthiness before others will follow them. Warren Bennis says qualities that establish trust are competence, constancy, caring, candor, and congruity, which he defines as authenticity, reliability, and feeling comfortable with oneself.

To learn to assess your integrity, actively seek feedback from other people, whether they are friends, co-workers, and even employees, to determine your work attitude. Know whether your values and sense of responsibility coincide with expectations from you.