



He Great American Leader Meter

In almost every political race, the overall theme and the big question to answer is about leadership qualifications. The candidate that successfully demonstrates or persuades voters that he or she will make the best leader wins. The value and significance of leadership is important not just in politics but in business.

What makes a great leader and how does a leader inspire employees and create a successful company?

Studies find no leadership style prevails. Leaders come in all shapes and flavors. That being the case, the only way to judge a successful leader is by the success of his or her followers. You cannot succeed unless your people succeed; therefore, your only job is making your people successful.

Consider this: You are a leader if you are a parent, teacher, coach, consultant, politician, manager, or anyone held responsible for another's performance. For example:

- Teachers are successful leaders when they teach their students to love learning.
- Parents are successful leaders when they raise internally strong, contributing children.
- Coaches are successful leaders when their players achieve new personal bests.
- Consultants are successful leaders when their advice changes clients for the better.
- Managers are successful leaders when their employees are stretched, productive, and fulfilled in their jobs.
- Politicians are successful leaders when they contribute to societal progress.

Can leaders be made or are they just born that way and why does there seem to be a scarcity?

That there are so few great leaders can partly be explained by the Peter Principle, which claims that people tend to be promoted to their level of incompetence, where they stall in place and thereafter negatively impact the lives of their subordinates. Buckingham and Coffman in their seminal book, *First Break All the Rules*, found that people join companies but quit managers. Doing exhaustive research with the Gallup Organization, Buckingham and Coffman found the most discriminating criteria for great managers is how they treat their subordinates. Some things you can do to work yourself into the great category:

- Make sure your employees know what is expected of them.
- Ensure your employees have the materials and equipment to do their jobs.
- Provide an opportunity for your employees to do what they do best every day.
- Recognize and praise your employees at least once a week.
- Mentor, encourage, and show consideration to your employees.