**Development of effective leadership skills**

Effective leadership skills don’t happen by accident. They’re cultivated through hard work, strategic focus, and consistency. And, no matter how advanced you are in your career, there’s always room to hone your leadership skills, becoming a more effective motivator and change agent.

The question is, what are some practical steps you can take to hone effective leadership skills? What are some ways you can become an even more valuable player within your organization? I’ve got a few suggestions to offer.

**Develop Discipline**

One of the first things you should do in pursuit of effective leadership skills is form some productive habits and routines; essentially, become a person marked by discipline.

Simply put, your team members will judge you based on the level of discipline you display. If you’re someone who regularly falls short of deadlines, or if you very visibly waste a lot of time, your employees won’t be motivated to put forth their best effort. However, if you embody a disciplined approach, your team members will follow suit.

So how do you become more disciplined? Start with some minor, personal habits and work your way up from there… for example, start waking up half an hour earlier, or working out before you head to the office.

**Stretch Yourself**

It’s difficult to develop effective leadership skills when you do the same thing day in and day out, or when you become complacent in your professional life.

Indeed, in order to grow yourself, it’s important to venture outside of your comfort zone; to take on new projects or tasks that go above and beyond your basic job description.

What’s more, you can’t simply sit and wait for these opportunities to come your way. Instead, you may need to actively seek them out, looking for chances to learn on the fly and increase the value you add to your organization.

**Be a Follower**

This may sound counter-intuitive, but I truly believe that, in order to be a good leader, you also need to be a good follower.

What do I mean by this? Well, for starters, it’s important to know when you’re not the subject matter expert in the room, and to listen rather than speak. Actively seek out people who know more than you and try to absorb as much of their wisdom as you possibly can.

**Inspire Others**

Are you known as a sad-sack or a downer in your workplace? Or do your colleagues recognize you as someone who is quick to offer a word of encouragement and positivity?

I’d highly recommend becoming someone who’s known to be inspiring and motivational. This really just takes some earnest effort on your part. Be ready and willing to listen to team members as they share some of the difficulties they’re facing. Let them know you care about what they’re going through and are there to support them however they need it.

The more you really *listen* and *encourage,* the more you’ll be recognized as an effective leader.

**Attend Conferences and Events**

Of course, one *great* way to develop effective leadership skills is to actively seek opportunities to be around other people in your field, and to engage in formal educational exercises. This might mean attending conferences, workshops, seminars, or even networking events.

I’d highly recommend participating in professional groups or associations where you can remain in-the-know about any events that are coming your way. Look for any opportunity you can find to be around other leaders and professionals, and to absorb some of their expertise and experience.

**Read More**

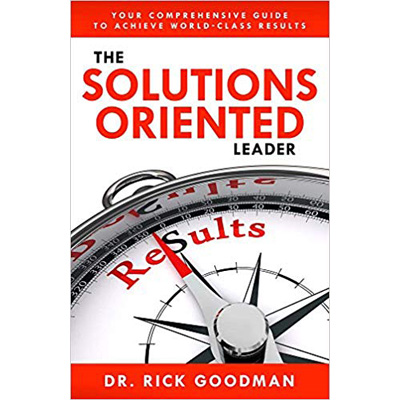
Another way you can develop more effective leadership skills? Take some time to read.

And I don’t necessarily just mean leadership books, though of course those can be valuable. Actually, I think there’s a lot of merit to reading widely, immersing yourself in a range of subjects that can broaden your mind and help you to see things from different points of view. You never know when a seemingly “irrelevant” topic may actually be of use to you in your day-to-day life.

Even reading fiction can be a great way to increase your empathy, something that’s invaluable to effective leadership.

**Hire a Coach**

There’s one final way to hone effective leadership skills, and it’s one that’s very near and dear to my heart: Enlist the services of an executive coach.

A coach is someone who can help you identify the areas where you’d like to improve, as well as locate any strengths you’d like to double down on. And, a coach will work with you to develop some specific goals and objectives, then set milestones and benchmarks to ensure you’re making progress toward those goals.

One of the great things about working with an executive coach is that it’s totally individualized; you actually get the chance to work one-on-one with someone who can help you develop the skills most consequential for your role and your career.

As you think about different ways to fine-tune your leadership skills, I hope you’ll consider giving me a call. It’s one of my great joys to provide executive coaching services to business leaders across the world. I look forward to speaking with you about developing effective leadership skills that will transform your life, your team, and your business.