



My View

I'M A TIP LEADER IF....

I recently co-taught a TIP National Leadership Academy, so I've had "TIP Leadership" on my mind for the last few weeks. One of the quotes we use repeatedly in this academy is from John Maxwell: *"If others aren't following you are just taking a walk."* I like this *"no nonsense"* definition of leadership. I like the fact that Maxwell defines leadership in terms of results and not in terms of a leader's title, a leader's pay, or what a leader professes.

That no "B.S." approach to leadership has inspired me to write about the straight shooting criteria I use to determine whether those in TIP (including me) who hold the title of "leader" are in fact acting like leaders. Below I complete the sentence I AM A LEADER IF.... with my criteria about how an effective TIP leader ACTS (not thinks, not intends, not talks...).

I AM A TIP LEADER IF....

- ... I have **passion** for the TIP Mission. That passion is apparent to others who can clearly see my enthusiasm for TIP, my perseverance when things go wrong and my mission focused decision making process.
- ... I **trust** TIP Volunteers to use themselves and their creativity on TIP Calls. I don't look over their shoulders.
- ... I focus on **ALL** TIP Volunteers including the "quiet ones". I do what I can to make sure each feels connected to the team.
- ... I **focus on others**, and it's clear to them that I'm not in TIP for me.
- ... I **"walk the talk"** and others can see that all my talk is backed up with action.
- ... I focus relentlessly on our **core service**....volunteers responding to calls quickly 100% of the time... recognizing that nothing else matters if we are not "delivering the goods."
- ... I recognize the health of TIP is dependent on my **awareness** of what's going on in the community. I use the tools available to me (newspaper/internet/websites) to keep informed about the community at large.
- ... I clearly and regularly let volunteers know the **goals** of the Affiliate. I encourage volunteers to bring me what they know and who they know to help accomplish those goals.
- ... I take **responsibility** when things go wrong. I don't ignore problems. I roll up my sleeves and try to fix them. If I can't fix a problem, I let it go. I don't whine nor do I tolerate the whining of others.
- ... I develop **strong relationships** with the right people, and I work with those champions to grow and develop TIP.
- ... I focus on **meeting the needs of others** before asking others to meet TIP's needs.
- ... I am a **strength finder**. I focus on people's talents and not their flaws.
- ... I **utilize the talents of others** to help accomplish important things for the program I can't do alone.
- ... I do **"nice things"** for others...bringing treats, writing thank you notes...
- ... I frequently say **thank you** to others, and I make a point of appreciating their individual skills and talents.
- ... I give **"gentle feedback"** to those who are not doing what they promised they would do. When feedback doesn't work, I "love them out" of the program. I expect everyone on the team to do what they have committed to doing. I always maintain the high standards.
- ... I am **tolerant** of "honest mistakes" and I create a culture which promotes "we need to learn from our mistakes."
- ... I don't make snap decisions. I **mull over** the many decisions which come my way. I always make decisions that are consistent with the TIP MISSION and TIP's values and beliefs.

- ... I have **integrity**. I am disciplined in my personal behavior. I'm honest. I keep my promises.
- ... I focus relentlessly on a **few activities/programs that yield significant results**. I do not "fall in love with" good ideas that don't work. If I try something and it doesn't work, I dump it.
- ... I keep things **simple**. I make sure it's simple for citizens to get involved in TIP, for donors to contribute and for TIP Volunteers to comply with policies and procedures.
- ... I constantly **try to improve** the program, and I encourage others to do so.
- ... I know how to present TIP in a way that **touches listeners' emotions**.
- ... I **celebrate** TIP "wins" and accomplishments with others.
- ... I **laugh** at my own foibles and at the inevitable craziness that happens in the World of TIP.
- ... I **prepare relentlessly** for all presentations, programs and activities. I want everything I do to be excellent.
- ... I **take care of myself** as a person so that I can provide leadership to TIP for a long time.
- ... I set **realistic expectations** for myself and others, recognizing that the road to success is not a straight line and is filled with challenges and disappointments.

So these are the behaviors I believe define a TIP Leader. I believe that all of us as TIP Leaders need to regularly evaluate ourselves by looking at what we actually DO day in and day out. It's not enough to want to be a good leader or to have the title of leader. We need to **act** like good leaders. I wish I could say that I do all of the things all of the time that I have included under I AM A TIP LEADER IF.... I don't. But I'm trying.

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