



American Weekly Inspiration

Thoughts for today and every day:

“The first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit. The second is to look things in the face and know them for what they are.”

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180) Emperor and philosopher

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“Never close your lips to those to whom you have opened your heart.” Charles Dickens (1812-1870) writer

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“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” John Dewey (1859-1952) philosopher and educator

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“In some corner of your life, you know more about something than anyone else on this earth. The true measure of your education is not what you know, but how you share what you know with others.”

Kent Nerburn, artist and writer

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“Achieving goals by themselves will never make us happy in the long term; it's who you become, as you overcome the obstacles necessary to achieve your goals, that can give you the deepest and most long-lasting sense of fulfillment.”

Anthony Robbins, motivational speaker and management consultant

American Update:

This will be the last American Inspiration of the school year and we will resume in mid-August when many of you will return back to school for a new year. We hope you have a fantastic summer ahead and that we have the chance to see some of you at summer camps. We also hope that the weekly message has had the chance to inspire you in some way and to pass it along to others. We love and appreciate any feedback or response.

As the last of the messages this year, we look ahead to our leaders, no matter what the workplace or school or team situation, to guide us to a successful year. I found the passage below about leadership that would work for any situation. I hope you will pass it along to the leaders of your team, school, or workplace.

Have a fantastic summer!

Inspiration of the Week:

A Leader Doesn't Have To Be The Boss

Dana Knight (*Workplace Reporter and Columnist, Indianapolis Star*)

You may be a clerk in the mailroom or the freshly graduated new guy at the office. Managing, being the boss, overseeing others just isn't in your job description – and may never be. But that doesn't mean you can't be a leader. Leadership isn't about job titles or positions. It is a way of carrying yourself and a method of influencing others that can be learned. There are, after all, lots of bosses who are terrible leaders and plenty of leaders who aren't bosses at all. “The best leaders bring out the best in their co-workers and colleagues by having high expectations for themselves and consistently meeting those demands,” says Theresa Farrington Rhodes, executive director of the Lacy Leadership Association, an Indianapolis-based organization designed to help build leadership skills in people looking to get involved in the nonprofit sector. “Inspire others and lead by example.” Take a look at these five ways to lead when you are not the boss.

- **Believe you can lead.** You may not hold that prestigious title, but you have to look in the mirror and realize your actions and behavior can be as influential as any mandate put out by a manager. What if you went into the boss's office and asked what you could do to help alleviate his work burden? What if you helped a co-worker with a project? What if you told the janitor about an opening for a better job? That is leadership. “It's influencing people above you, beside you and below you,” says John Maxwell, author of “The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization.”
- **Lead yourself first.** If you cannot manage yourself, no one will value you as a leader. “Most people are very concerned about leading others and often forget about themselves,” says Maxwell. What does it mean to lead yourself? It means being respected—behaving in a way that people admire. Remember that every move you make—thoughts, actions and words—contributes to whether you are respected. It means not griping about the job or gossiping in the office. It means being disciplined in work and being on time. “Being liked is good, but being respected is even better,” says Rhodes.
- **Put others first.** “A leader gets up in the morning and says, “What can I do to make someone else better today?” says Maxwell. “A nonleader gets up and says, “What's for breakfast?” Making others look good, even if they are your

“competitors” or peers who may be vying for that same promotion, in the end will help you out, he says. Making people feel good is also a trait of leadership. “Learn the names of the parking attendants, security guards, cleaning staff, receptionists, and those who work in the coffee shop in the lobby,” says Rhodes. “Your reputation as a leader will be cemented on many different levels.”

- **Be a decision maker.** This is possible even if you are not the boss. The worst kinds of employees are those who go into the boss’s office and ask for ideas. “These workers become irritants,” says Maxwell. You should be going to the boss with your own ideas and solutions to problems. “Sometimes being a leader means standing up and making yourself heard,” says Rhodes. Come up with great ideas without being asked to. Gain a reputation as someone who can deal with challenges and conflicts. Take the initiative to make a decision without always having to ask the boss first.

- **Be humble.** Don’t mistake leadership for power or arrogance. The greatest leaders have proved time and time again they are modest. Realize that you can lead and be influential while still showing humility. “Be self-sufficient enough and willing to make your own copies, operate the postage machine, and send a fax,” says Rhodes. Have a basic understanding of what all of your colleagues do and how they perform their jobs. Knowing how the entire operation works makes you more knowledgeable and also shows you could step in if needed.

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