

● TIER ONE

There is no question about it: you are a LEADER.

The question is, what kind of leader are you? Are you a leader that is focused on your own goals, or those you lead? Are you a leader in word, reward, or position only, or are you a leader in action? Are you a leader that others quickly dismiss, or are you a leader that others faithfully follow?

“The mark of a good leader is loyal followers. Leadership is nothing without a following.” - Jewish Proverb

TIER ONE leaders are the kind of leaders who see a problem, know what to do, and bring others along with them to solve it. They encourage, inspire, and equip those around them to take part in the adventure/goal/task/mission in front of them; they are not lone rangers. In fact, there is no such thing as a LONE RANGER leader-- if you are leading, and you are all alone, you are no longer leading.

LONELY LEADERS ARE NOT WORTH FOLLOWING

I don't remember when I first heard it— probably my sophomore or junior year of high school. Whenever it was, it's stuck with me ever since. For the better part of my life, it shaped how I understood leadership, and relationships with those I would seek to lead. It caused me to be more guarded than I really needed, and certainly more cynical. With it as the lens through which my leadership came into focus, it made the intentions of those who sought to know me blurry. It was one of those pieces of advice that was given from a place of genuine concern, but turned out to be advice that was genuinely useless.

Leadership is lonely.

That's it. Three words, etched in the still-wet foundation of what would become my “-ology” of leadership. If you want to be at the top; if you seek to lead others; if you desire to call the shots, then know that you will be lonely. It would be a self-imposed isolation, though. I'd be taught to keep people at an arm's distance, because more times than not they had veiled intentions; protect myself, because people will exploit their relationship with me to get what's best for them. I'd need to keep my head on a swivel for the blind side hit, and my ears open for the sound of the second shoe. And so I did.

And it was really, really lonely. Selfishness usually is.

I don't remember when I first began to notice that this piece of sage advice wasn't working out for me very well, but I do remember the words that Coach Thorton would use that would permanently derail my understanding of leadership, and in some ways, my life. He said, “Leadership is lonely, if you only care about yourself. Leadership is lonely, if you climb over other people to get to the top. But if you care about people enough to help them get to the top, you'll never be lonely. Because when you get to the top, there will be a whole-lotta people that wouldn't be there without you, and it will be a big, fun party.”

Wait. What?

“Leadership doesn't have to be lonely?”

“You want me to stop thinking about what's best for ME, and think about what's best for YOU?”

“But what about me? What about my goals? How will I...”

This was a betrayal to all I knew about life and leadership (which, admittedly, wasn't much). This philosophy of leadership required a reorientation of what was most important to me; a reallocation of my time;



● **TIER ONE** *(Continued)*

and a redistribution of my efforts, and it sounded...hard. But on the other hand, my very best (selfish, me-centered) efforts had gotten me in some of my worst situations, so what did I (you) have to lose? A lot actually: friends, relationships, community, trust, support...things that only people can offer.

Coach Thorton understood something about life and leadership that I, and so many others have missed, ignored, or forgotten: it's not about Me.

Our affinity for ourselves has conditioned us to think just the opposite: It's ALL about Me. And that has destroyed marriages, homes, offices, teams and lives, and we have no one to blame but ourselves. When we are our own most valuable, we'd rather lose for ourselves, than win for the team. Selfishness is insidious like that.

The goal of leadership isn't to "get you to help Me reach My goals", but for "Me to help you reach yours." Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing to help other people?'"

But watch this: If we will put in the self-work to work against our selfish nature, and serve others, both their lives, and ours will be changed. That's because when you forget about yourself long enough to lift up other people, then people are going to realize that you are WORTH FOLLOWING— or promoting, or celebrating, or running through a brick wall for. Zig Ziglar said it like this, "You can have anything you want in life, if you just help enough other people get what they want."

(You might want to re-read that. Go ahead. I'll wait.)

That's how you become a TIER ONE leader.

● **Quotes of the Month:**

"You can have anything you want in life, if you just help enough other people get what they want." - Zig Ziglar

"There is no such thing as a LONE RANGER leader-- if you are leading, and you are all alone, you are no longer leading." - Coach Mackey

"TIER ONE leaders are capable, willing, and others will follow them." - Col. Craig Flowers, USA (Ret.)

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing to help other people.'" - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"F.A.M.I.L.Y: Forget About Me I Love You."

Captain's Log:

1. What are the biggest challenges you face in leading others to follow you?

2. Would you follow you? Be honest.

3. What are some examples of your teammates having an "ownership" stake in your team goals or projects?
 - a. How can you bring out the best in your teammates?

 - b. How can you encourage people who have a "scout-team" role to bring their all?

 - c. **Take Action: 3 for 3.** Find out THREE unique facts or abilities about THREE teammates each week this month.

4. Can you articulate your team's goals in 3 sentences or less? **Write it down. Use the questions below as a guide:**
 - What you are going to accomplish?

 - Why is this worth it?

 - Why others are wanted/needed?

 - What is the story that you are going to tell, in order to sell this to your teammates?

5. Describe a leader you know that genuinely loves you? How does this person communicate that care? How can you do the same for your teammates? **THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER:**
 - a. Love is more than factual KNOWLEDGE; it is actual CONCERN.

 - b. They will never care about your goals, if you don't care about theirs.

 - c. FAKE or FORCED love is not love. Be genuine, or be irrelevant.