

## BE A LION

As stated by Alexander the Great, “I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by lions.” In other words, people are only as great as the leaders who guide them.

Leadership should be instilled in children from a young age. A leader whose goal is to achieve peace is not enough to secure peace; the leader must be strong and able to steer its followers toward citizen diplomacy to acquire peace. However, the characteristics of leadership vary from culture to culture. Culture defines almost every aspect of a person’s life; it is the fundamental basis for our behaviors and societal norms.

In America, people value charisma, participation, and other universal traits such as intelligence and critical thinking. Personality is crucial in deciding who becomes a prominent leader. Young people in America need to be conscious of their personality and how they present themselves to others. Throughout history, significant leaders who were extremely charismatic include President John F. Kennedy, President Ronald Reagan, and Martin Luther King Jr. They were all able to empathize with their followers and earn their trust. Essentially, young people can start honing in on charisma, which will teach them to be compassionate. When others see their compassion, they will try to mirror it. Additionally, American leaders encourage others to participate and create environments where multiple perspectives can be presented. Listening to other opinions with an open mind is a skill young adults should adopt if they wish to be a leader in America.

Contrastly, in China, self preservation and team work is valued. Chinese culture values a leader who is conscious of their status and presents a sterner demeanor rather than a charismatic one. China’s recent and previous Chairmen all emit the persona of a fearless leader. Moreover, teamwork is cherished. In Chinese government, to be the president one must work their way up the ladder, rather than be elected. To travel up the ladder they must be intelligent and know how interact with others.

Culture dictates what traits a strong leader should possess. There is no one “good” or “bad” set of leadership skills. Children should adopt skills that will help them thrive in the society *they* inhabit. World peace can only be achieved if moral leaders can direct and teach their followers in an effective manner. One must start small. Teenagers can start building leadership skills by joining clubs and running for officer positions, and a few years later, they can run for president or start a club of their own. Youth leadership is also beautiful in that young adults learn while they lead. They learn to problem solve. They learn to communicate effectively. They learn to see the interconnectedness of the world around them. A great leader can transform their followers into citizen diplomats by encouraging them to work their hardest to benefit the world around them. Young people should be lions and make a difference in the world.

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