

12 CHARACTERISTICS OF A

Good Leader



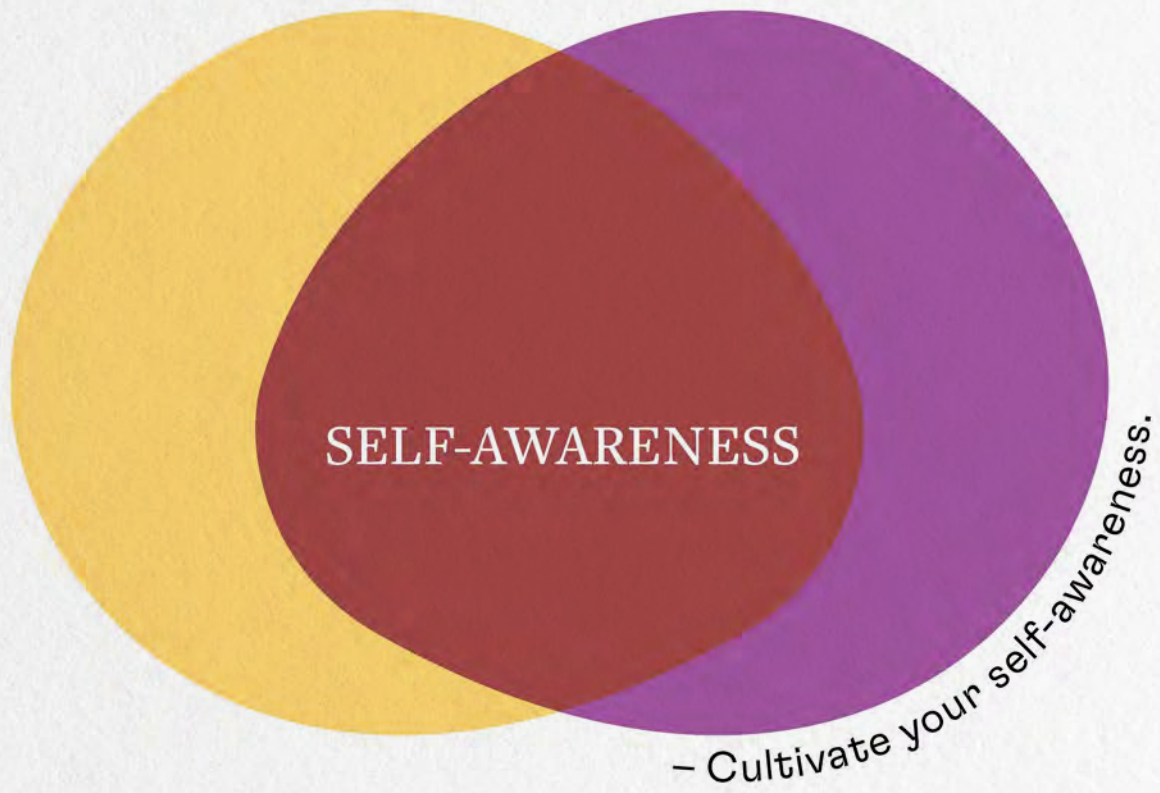
What Are The Characteristics of a Good Leader?

No matter how much or how quickly the world changes — how automated or disrupted work and life become — one fact remains: **outstanding leaders create a positive path forward for us all.**

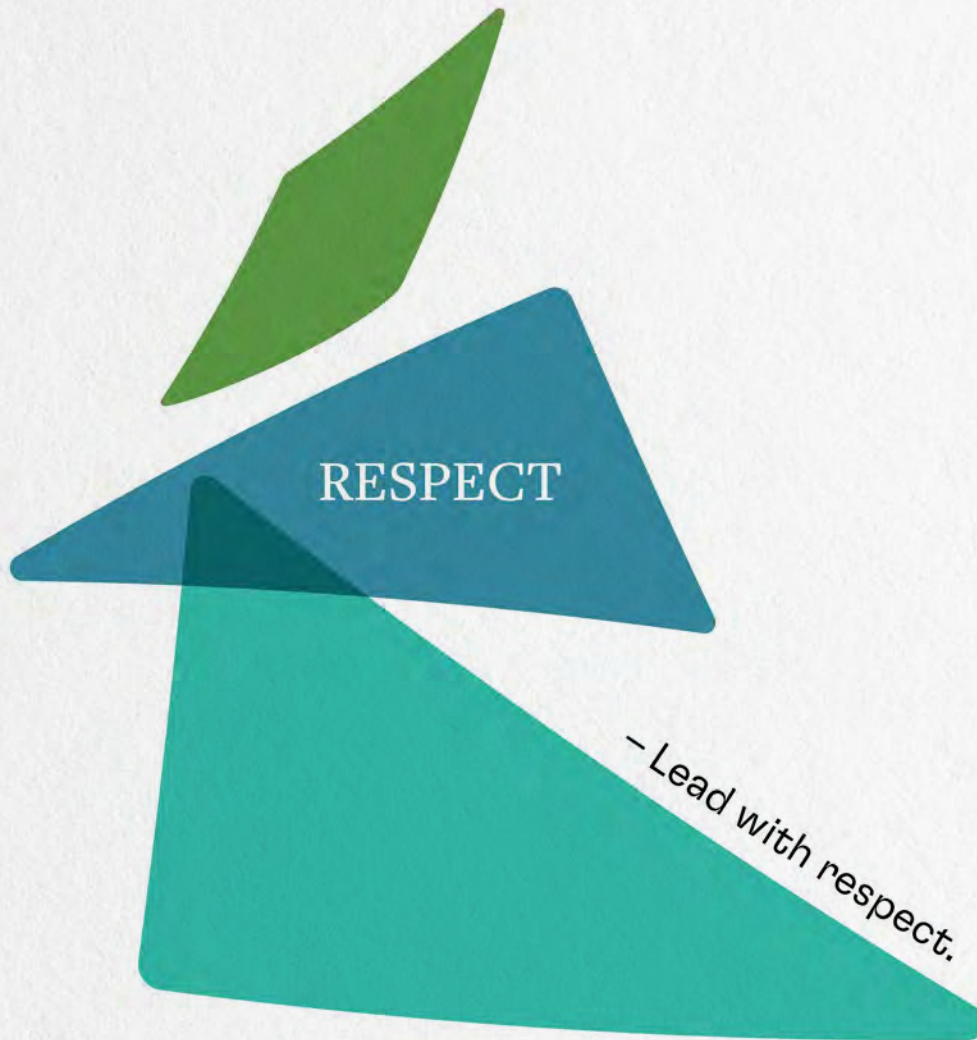
But what does good leadership really look like?

At the Center for Creative Leadership, we're proud to be recognized as a **top-ranked nonprofit provider of leadership development, and a pioneer in the field of global leadership research.** We've been investigating leadership challenges, competencies, and best practices for over 50 years.

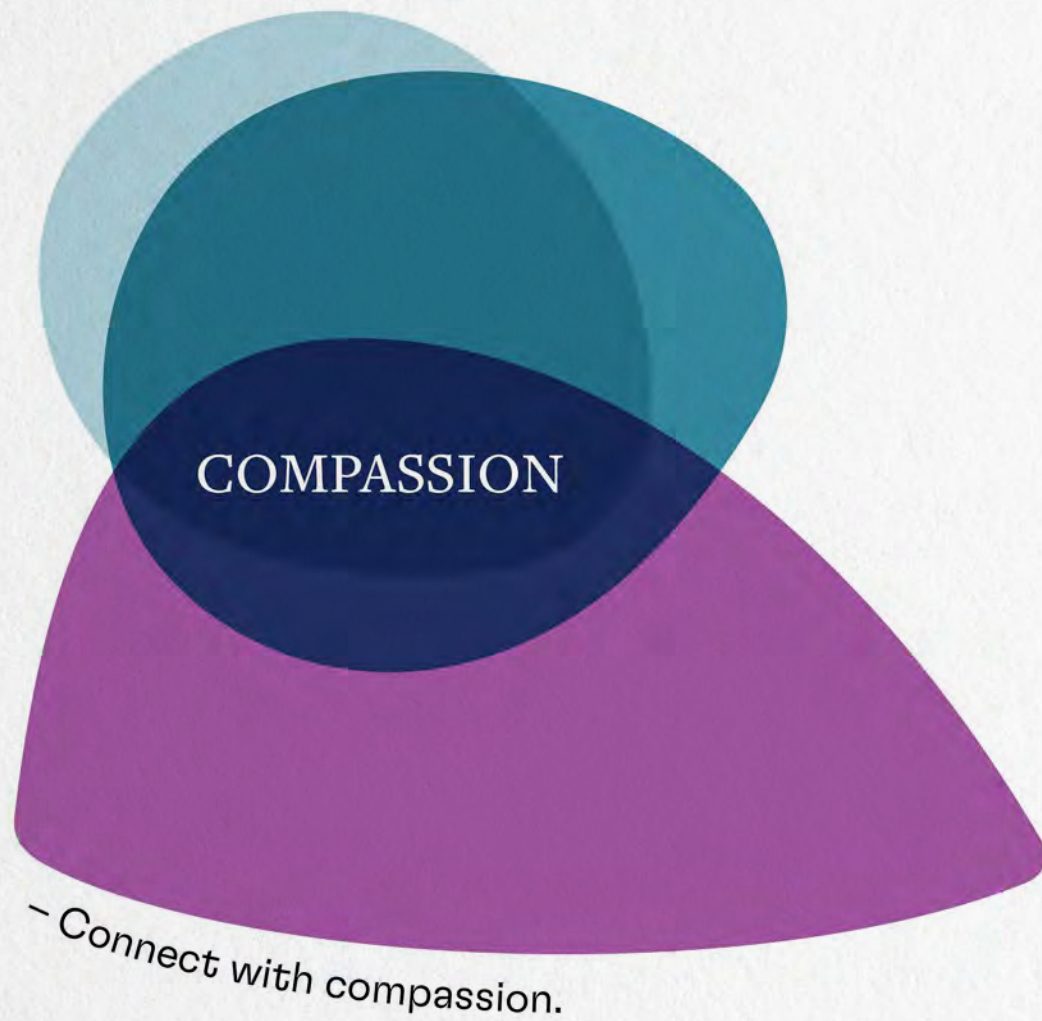
Based upon our decades of research and experience in the field, we've found that good leaders consistently possess certain essential qualities. Read on to learn what they are, and how to begin cultivating these **10 characteristics of a good leader within yourself, on your team, and at your organization.**



While this is a more inwardly focused trait, self-awareness and humility are paramount for leadership. The better you understand yourself and recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, [increasing your self-awareness](#), the more effective you can be as a leader.

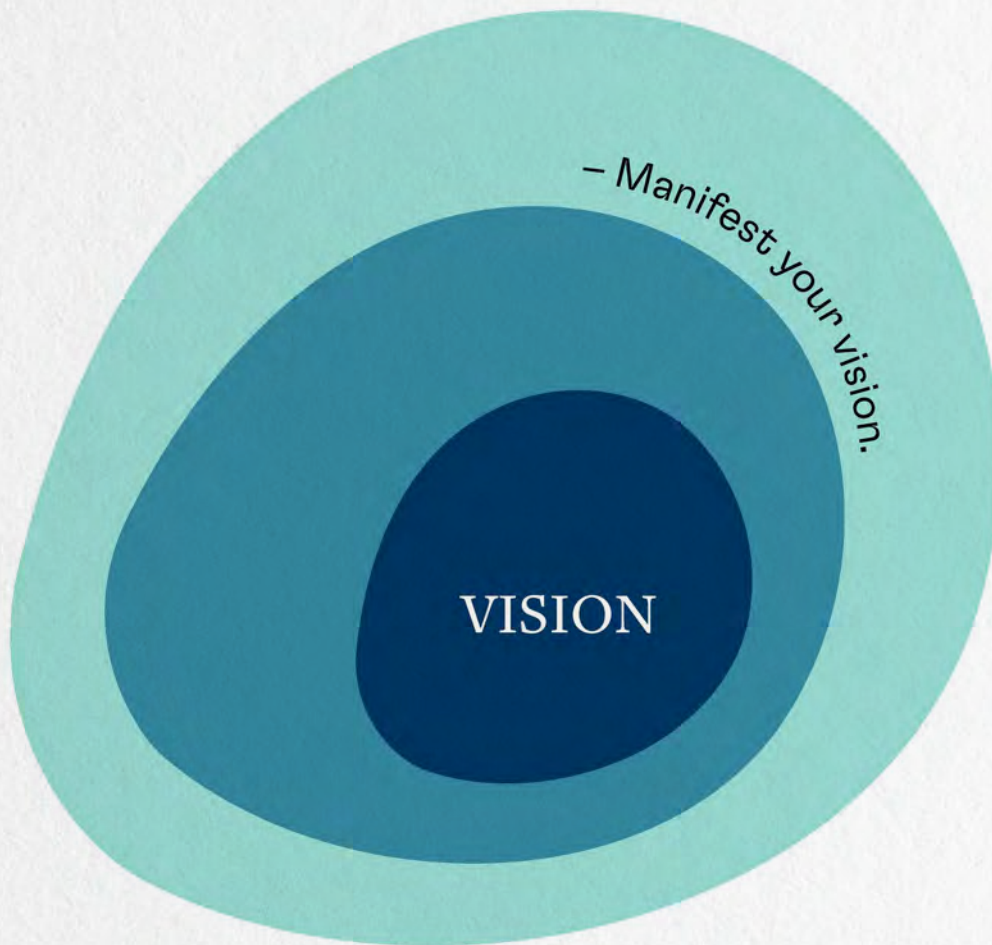


Treating people with respect on a daily basis is one of the most important things a leader can do. It will ease tensions and conflict, create trust, and improve effectiveness. Respect is about more than the absence of disrespect, and it can be shown in many different ways, but often starts with valuing others' perspectives and [building a sense of belonging](#).



Compassion is one of the most powerful and important acts of leadership. It's more than simply showing empathy or even listening to understand — compassion requires leaders to act on what they hear.

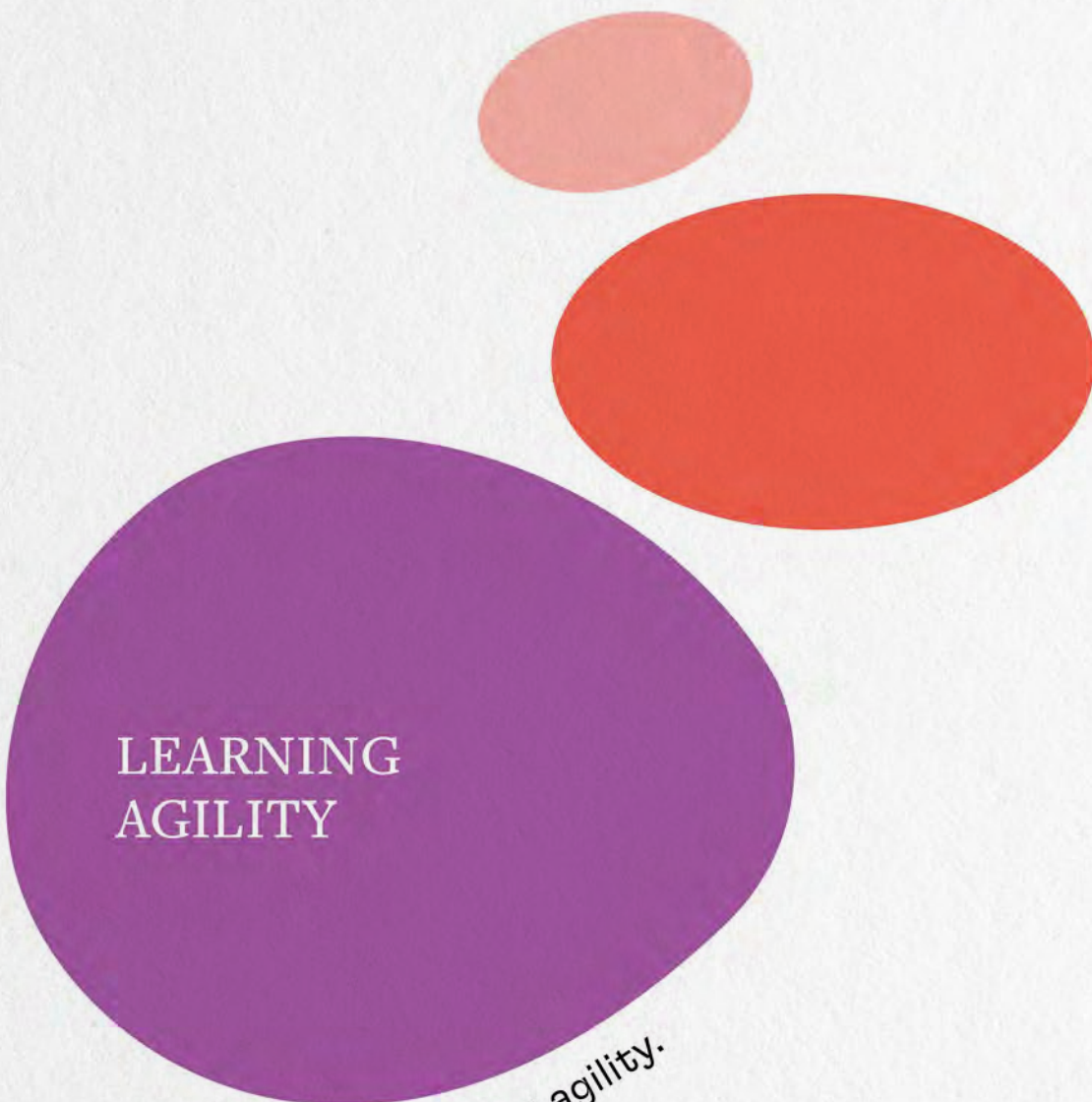
This is the core of [compassionate leadership](#).



Motivating others and garnering commitment are an essential part of leadership. Understanding what you and your team hope to accomplish is important, and [communicating the vision](#) in a way that connects the overall direction of the organization to the values of your individual team members can help to inspire trust and drive priorities forward.



[The best leaders are skilled communicators](#) who are able to communicate in a variety of ways, from transmitting information to inspiring others to coaching direct reports. And you must be able to listen to, and communicate with, a wide range of people across roles, geographies, social identities, and more.



LEARNING AGILITY

– Flex your learning agility.

Learning agility is the ability to know what to do when you don't know what to do. If you're a "quick study" or are able to excel in unfamiliar circumstances, you might already be learning agile. But anybody can [foster learning agility](#) through practice, experience, and effort.



COLLABORATION

– Create through collaboration.

Good leaders can work with a variety of colleagues from differing positions, backgrounds, locations, and experiences, [spanning boundaries](#) and learning to work across various types of divides and silos.



INFLUENCE

– Recognize your influence.

For some people, “influence” sounds unseemly. But as a leader, you must be able to influence others to get the work done. Persuading people [through logical, emotional, or cooperative appeals](#) is an important trait of inspiring, effective leaders. Influence is quite different from manipulation, and it needs to be done authentically.



INTEGRITY

– Inspire through *integrity*.

Integrity is an essential leadership trait for the individual and the organization. It's especially important for top-level executives who are charting the organization's course and making countless other significant decisions. Our research shows that [integrity may actually be a potential blind spot for organizations](#). Make sure your organization reinforces the importance of honesty and integrity to leaders at various levels.



It can be hard to speak up at work, whether you want to voice a new idea, provide feedback to a direct report, or flag a concern for someone above you. That's part of the reason courage is a key trait of good leaders. Rather than avoiding problems or allowing conflicts to fester, [courage enables truth-telling](#) so leaders can step up and move things in the right direction.



Being thankful can lead to higher self-esteem, reduced depression and anxiety, and better sleep. [Gratitude can even make you a better leader](#). Yet few people regularly say “thank you” in work settings, even though most people say they’d be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss. The best leaders know how to demonstrate sincere gratitude in the workplace.



RESILIENCE

— Nurture your resilience.

Resilience is more than the ability to bounce back from obstacles and setbacks — it's the ability to respond adaptively to challenges. [Practicing resilient leadership](#) means you'll project a positive outlook that will help others maintain the emotional strength they need to move forward and overcome setbacks.

Ready to Build the Characteristics of a Good Leader?

Develop the qualities of a good leader in yourself and at your organization by exploring our many world-renowned leadership programs.

Learn more at ccl.org/programs



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