

Leadership Now

3 Ways to Be An Effective Self-Leader

"You can't lead others if you can't lead yourself, and you can't lead yourself without the right tools."

By Ken Blanchard

It's hard to lead others if you don't know how to lead yourself. This applies not only in business but also in your personal life.

I had to re-examine the concepts of self-leadership recently when I spent a year improving my health with the help of my good friend, fitness expert Tim Kearin. Even though he worked with me every step of the way, I had to be a good self-leader when no one else was around. Here's what I learned about how to be an effective self-leader.

Beware of Assumed Constraints

Many of us hold tight to past beliefs that may be subliminally interfering with our achieving a goal. For example, I used to tell people "I wish I were better organized." Then one day a good friend of mine said, "That's the most ridiculous comment I've ever heard. You're the most organized person I know--when you want to do something."

Thinking of myself as unorganized was an assumed constraint that had thwarted my ability to fully succeed in that area.

Self-leaders look closely at long-held beliefs about themselves and dump the ones that are hindering goal achievement.

Know your Points of Power

Everyone uses different types of power in their lives and work. To be an effective self-leader, you need to know the nature of your unique strengths--your points of power. Position power, the type that may come to mind first, is only one kind of power base.

For example, if you are good at communicating and motivating people, you have personal power. If people like to be around you and be associated with you, you have relationship power. If you have specific expertise or skills in a particular area, you have knowledge power. And if you're the "go-to" person in the office or at home who knows how to really get things done, you have task power.

With my fitness program, I knew I needed people with knowledge power to help me, but because I am a "people person," I was able to use my relationship power to secure a great partner and several others to work with and support me in my journey. Identify your own points of power and develop them to assist you in accomplishing your objectives.

Collaborate for Success

As a self-leader, this is where you take the initiative to get the direction and support you need to do an activity or achieve a goal. Depending on the amount of competence and commitment you have in any one area, you need varying degrees of support and direction from others.

On my fitness journey, I realized that there were some areas of fitness where I needed close supervision and direction because I was an enthusiastic beginner with very little competence. In other areas, I needed direction and also caring support--I had tried these things before with little success so I started out discouraged.

If you are capable but still a bit cautious in an activity, you wouldn't need direction but might still need support. And if you know what you're doing and are confident being left alone to achieve a goal, you are a self-reliant achiever who no longer needs direction or support in that area. Diagnosing your own development level and determining the leadership style you need is a big part of self-leadership.

In business and in their personal lives, many people who are having trouble accomplishing goals suffer quietly by assuming the worst. They think they don't have the power to do anything about it and refuse to ask for the help they need. Effective self-leaders are able to avoid self-defeating beliefs, leverage their points of power, and collaborate with others--resulting in goal achievement, independence, and the ability to lead others more effectively.

-- Ken Blanchard, co-author of *Fit at Last: Look and Feel Better Once and for All*, one of the most influential leadership experts in the world, is cofounder and Chief Spiritual Officer of the Ken Blanchard Companies. He is the author or coauthor of fifty books that have sold more than 20 million copies, including the iconic *One Minute Manager*®. Follow Ken on Twitter.