

# The CHOICE Connection

Positive strategies. Practical solutions.



constructive  
**CHOICE**  
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## Quotable Quotes

*"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said."* ~ Peter Drucker

*"Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out."* ~ Ronald Reagan

*"It makes a big difference in your life when you stay positive."* ~ Ellen DeGeneres

*"Don't just fit with the crowd and be normal, try to be extraordinary."* ~ Kerri Strug

*"Individual commitment to a group effort-that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."* ~ Vince Lombardi

Dear Jean,

Think of a leader - your model, the person you look up to and wish to emulate. Who do you see? What do you see? Which qualities draw you to follow this leader? Are these the same qualities you believe you need to be the leader you are striving to become? Choose your top 5 - those qualities that you believe every leader must have. Well now, I think this activity is a challenge - only 5 to identify as the top qualities, behaviors or competencies? And are they the same 5 qualities for any leader, regardless of their work role or their life role? This month I am going to dig a bit deeper into the qualities, associated behaviors, competencies, skills ... call them what you will ... the factors that set the leaders apart from others. It is more often the what and how

they do what they do - this is what I have observed that attract people to line up and follow their leaders

With Joy,  
Jean

## Leaders: What Sets Them Apart - The Unique Skills by Jean Strosinski

There are so many books written about what it takes to be a good Leader. What I have come to realize about most of them is that they don't deal with the technical or hard skills that a leader has. An individual's leadership style doesn't seem to be tied to what they know, or even the technical experience they can bring to a company.



It appears that leaders are more often chosen and brought in for their previous successes in HOW they have accomplished what they set out to do. Often, these skills and qualities fall into what are termed as 'soft skills.' And I know most people cringe when you speak to the 'soft' skills - so let's just refer to them as to what they really are - your 'person' skills.

I recently ran across a couple of lists that detailed what Leaders have. The first list outlines their Top 10 'Skills.' Their Top 10 List identified the Leader's 'person' skills as:

**Communication**, Motivation, **Delegating**, **Positivity**, Trustworthiness, **Creativity**, Feedback, Responsibility, **Commitment**, and Flexibility.

A second list simply refers to '10 Key Qualities' that every good Leader should possess, and learn to emphasize. This list includes: Honesty, **Ability to Delegate**, **Communication**, Sense of Humor, Confidence, **Commitment**, **Positive Attitude**, **Creativity**, Intuition, and Ability to Inspire.

Five of the 10 skills show up in both lists (bolded). You could argue, I suppose, that trustworthiness and honesty are similar and that motivation and ability to inspire are also the same. I see them as connected, certainly, and yet with subtleties that may make the difference between acting in the role of an effective Manager vs. a Leader.

Focusing on just the 5 skills above that showed up in both lists, I will share some insights and what I have observed over the years - those qualities that stand out for me about these unique skills of Leaders.

**COMMUNICATION** - Listening, clarity of intent, openness, and consistency are the keys repeated over and over again. What I read over and over again is LISTEN more than you speak and when you do speak, have a mastery of communication that there is no doubt in anyone's mind as to what you are truly saying, where you are headed and what is needed to get done.

**DELEGATING** - Trust in your team. Know their strengths and what they truly excel at. Leaders truly can't do it all and remain focused and on task. Leaders also have their personal strengths and what they are lacking must show up in the others on their teams. If you build the team, build the team so you can rely on them to do what needs to be done ... and then let them do it.

**POSITIVITY** - Consider the need for a balance between productivity and playfulness. The attitude and environment that allows for play, humor, social interactions can do more for showing a Leader cares, and encouraging the team to go the extra mile.

**CREATIVITY** - the surprise here is the tie of creativity to the decision-making skills of the Leader. The literature notes that the Leader must be able to 'think outside the box.' My visual when I hear this is that a person steps out of all that they know and leaves all their experiences behind. A more effective visual for me is a person keeping one foot in their box of knowledge and experiences, and putting half their body out to view the other options, test the waters and seek the non-traditional solutions. Keeping the team safe in the decision-making is key.

**COMMITMENT** - Be the model, do what you say you are going to do, keep your agreements and follow up. Be willing to do what it takes to get it done, without getting in the way, and sometimes that means you get in the trenches and lend your strengths to effort.

I know there are more skills each of you would like to add to the top of this list. And truly, there are more skills a Leader needs. Think again about the Leader you look up to. At the core of your Leader's spirit, do these 5 skills/qualities show up strong? If your Leader needs to strengthen one of these areas, have they made sure the strength is present among their team? Are they working on it for their development? Do they have another unique skill/quality that is their strength and do they share it freely?

## **Tools and Resources** **FROM THE BOOKSHELF**

[Being the Boss: The 3 Imperatives for Becoming a Great Leader](#) by L.S. Hill & K. Lineback

[Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others](#) by J.C. Maxwell

[The Carrot Principle: How the Best Managers Use Recognition to Engage Their People, Retain Talent and Accelerate Performance](#) by A. Gostick & C. Elton (2009)

## **THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS**

[10 Communication Secrets of Great Leaders](#)

[How to Delegate the Right Tasks to the Right People](#)

[Positive Leadership](#)

[The Importance of Creative Thinking Skills In Executive Leaders](#)

[Endurance and Commitment](#)

## **Reflection**

Are you the leader you wish to be? Are you on the path to develop your leadership skills?

Observing your model leader is one way to learn and understand the 'what and how' of the

leaders skills and qualities. It is just as important, in your growth and development as a leader, to know which of these five skills/qualities show up for you?

If one or two of the five are not as strong as you want them to be, what other leadership skill/quality is the strength you offer to your team?

Consider each of the five--Communication, Delegation, Positivity, Creativity and Commitment. For each of these unique leader skills, what aspects have you mastered? What aspects do you still want to develop and grow?

I invite you to choose one of the five mentioned and focus on it for the rest of this year. Explore what you have mastered, dig deeper and find the venues to learn more, practice more and share your strengths related to this skill. In December of this year, you will have a chance to reflect again on your growth in this skill.

## Choose To

Practice leadership ... strengthen your skills and qualities ... listen to others ... convey clearly ... trust others ... delegate to your team's strengths ... be productive in your play ... make decisions with heart ... discover the non-traditional solutions ... follow-up on your agreements ... be true to yourself.



## February Joyful Observances

American Heart Month

[Jobs in Golf Month](#)

[Library Lovers Month](#)

National Parent Leadership Month

Just Say No to PowerPoint Week (Feb 1-7)

[Random Acts of Kindness Week \(Feb 9-15\)](#)

[Great Backyard Bird Count \(Feb 13-16\)](#)

National Engineers Week (Feb 22-28)

Texas Cowboy Poetry Week (Feb 27-28)

Girl Scout Cookie Day (Feb 6)

Wear Red Day (Feb 6)

Opera Day (Feb 8)

National Shut-in Visitation Day (Feb 11)

[World Radio Day \(Feb 13\)](#)

[National Margarita Day \(Feb 22\)](#)

[National Day of Action \(Peace Corps\) \(Feb 27\)](#)

## Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- \* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- \* New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- \* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- \* Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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