

“The Flaws of Leadership”

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In our day-to-day society, we have witness great achievements and accomplishments in leadership from individuals who have very little training or education. On the other side, we have seen companies and organizations tumult from poor leadership of well trained and educated men and women. If we look back over the years there are plenty examples we can learn from. The best case of them all is Enron Inc. What caused Enron’s demise? What were the signs and who was really to blame? These questions are not only addressed to Enron’s situation, but, we can ask these same questions about many organizations who ended up with the same fate.

There are many reasons why leaders, companies and organizations fail. In this article, I will concentrate on two and they are planning and responsibility. I will address them in the order I listed them.

Planning. With every great organization there was a great plan that was put into place. With every failed organization there was the lack of or no plan. Planning is the cornerstone to success of every organization. Leaders have to and must invoke this concept. They have to live it and breathe it. Without planning there can be no vision. Without a vision there is no organization. Without an organization there are no leaders.

When planning is effective it allows organizations to take a more collaborative approach to the production and setting of organizations business objectives. Leaders at every level in the organization must be involved in the planning process. If this does not happen the organization is doomed for failure. A good plan shows an overall path and clear responsibilities. It contains the details for getting the job done. Even down to taking care of the people who are your most important asset.

Responsibility. In the military there is an unwritten rule and it is: “Rule 13; When in Charge Take Charge.” You will never find this rule written in any regulations or leadership manuals. But, this statement, “When in charge, take charge” speaks volumes. To address my opening statement about failed organizations and failed leaders, Ken Lay of Enron, Inc., was a prime of example of not taking responsibility for the things that went wrong. Good leaders will always take responsibility not only for the things that go well, but also for things that go wrong.

According to James J. and Constance M. Messina, PhDs (2007)¹ they state the following about accepting and not accepting responsibility:

¹ **Coping.org** is a Public Service of James J. Messina, Ph.D. & Constance M. Messina, Ph.D., 1999-2007 James J. Messina, Ph.D. & Constance Messina, Ph.D.

Accepting personal responsibility.

- Acknowledging that you are solely responsible for the choices in your life.
- Accepting that you are responsible for what you choose to feel or think.
- Accepting that you choose the direction for your life.
- Accepting that you cannot blame others for the choices you have made.
- Pointing the finger of responsibility back to yourself and away from others when you are discussing the consequences of your actions.

When you have not accepted personal responsibility.

- Overly dependent on others for recognition, approval, affirmation, and acceptance.
- Chronically hostile, angry, or depressed over how unfairly you have been or are being treated.
- Fearful about ever taking a risk or making a decision.
- Overwhelmed by disabling fears.
- Unsuccessful at the enterprises you take on in life.

Having a plan and taking responsibilities for your actions are major steps in becoming a successful leader and having a successful organization. We have witnessed some great achievements by some great leaders. We have also witnessed some of the worst failures within organizations on behalf of bad and immoral leaders. In doing your self assessment and looking at the person in the mirror who is looking right back at you, the question will always remain same in regards to your life and that questions is; "What type of leader do you want to be?"