

Leadership Quiz—Courage and Change

by Sheila Murray Bethel, Ph.D.

Your leadership talents are being constantly tested and challenged. Whether you are leading at work, in the community or at home, the courage to explore your attitudes and aptitudes will be one of your most influential qualities. Courage and change go hand in hand when it comes to increasing your effectiveness as a leader,

As you review these ten statements ask yourself, *"Where do I need to change, grow and stretch to reach my full capacity?"*

1. The courage to seek the truth. I am willing to seek out unpleasant truths, even when they may conflict with things I have a great investment in, or when the truth may threaten my physical, intellectual, or emotional security. I recognize that my personal freedom depends on my ability to seek and find truth.

2. The courage to lead an ethical life. In a cynical, sometimes dissolute world, I realize that it takes courage to be ethical. I resist the temptation to be less than ethical, even when "everyone is doing it." I regard honest people as heroes, not fools.

3. The courage to be involved. Apathy and indifference can be more devastating than any natural or man-made disasters. Despite occasional compassion fatigue, I remain committed to making a difference and getting others involved. I refuse to look the other way.

4. The courage to reject cynicism. Cynicism is a comforting and protective refuge, but one I resist vigilantly. I know that trust and optimism, essential to a productive life, are impossible if I give in to the cowardice of cynicism.

5. The courage to assume responsibility. I alone am responsible for my actions, whether they lead to success or failure. I refuse to waste time on making excuses, harboring unrealistic hopes, or placing blame. I am willing to share responsibility and accountability with others, and back them up 100 percent if things go wrong.

6. The courage to lead at home. I know that my home and family are my most powerful legacy for the future. I mentor my children, giving them equal love and discipline. I'm there 100 percent for my partner. I honor my parents and older relatives, even if advanced age, ill health, or different values make communication seem difficult and unrewarding. I live each day with my family and won't think, ATomorrow I'll have more time.

7. The courage to persist. I have the courage to delay gratification, to endure the long haul, and to make sacrifices when necessary. I frequently visualize the next few years and anticipate the results of my actions. I summon the inner resources to stay on track by keeping my eye on this big picture.

8. The courage to serve. In an ego-driven, success-driven society, I have the courage to put myself second. I realize that the loftiest leader is the one who serves others best. My job, no matter what the description or title, is to provide satisfaction, solve problems, fill needs, and find answers in a way that enhances and empowers those around me.

9. **The courage to lead.** Few people are willing to stand for something, or even to clarify what they would stand for if they could. Others criticize without offering solutions, but I concentrate on what I stand for, on solutions and goals, and on how I can motivate others to action. I'm not content to wait for someone else to take charge and point a direction.

10. **The courage to follow.** Unlike leaders of image, A Leader of substance knows when and how to follow willingly. I have learned the benefits of being a good follower, of welcoming the ideas and contributions of others without feeling that my position or integrity has been challenged. By sharing power, I increase my own personal and professional power, and make myself aware of the challenges that others face every day.

Having the courage of your convictions will help you boldly meet today's challenges. Believing in your physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual standards and values enables you to apply your resources and creative energy when faced with problems. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "*You must do the thing you cannot do,*" General George C. Patton said that courage is "*fear holding on another minute.*" Examining your courage and making changes as you grow in your leadership capacity is the example that enables others to have the courage to follow.