

# THE LAW OF RESPECT

People Naturally Follow Leaders Stronger Than Themselves

People don't follow others by accident. They follow individuals whose leadership they respect. People who are an 8 in leadership don't go out and look for a 6 to follow – they naturally follow a 9 or 10. The less skilled follow the more highly skilled and gifted. Followers are attracted to people who are better leaders than themselves. That is the Law of Respect.

What causes one person to respect and follow another? Is it because of the qualities of the leader? Is it due to a process the leader and follower engage in? Does it occur because of the circumstances? I believe all of those factors can come into play. Based on my observations and personal experience, here are the top six ways that leaders gain others' respect:

1. **Natural Leadership Ability** – First and foremost is leadership ability. Some people are born with greater skills and ability to lead than others. All leaders are not created equal. However, as I've stated in the Law of the Lid and the Law of Process, every person can become a better leader. If you possess natural leadership ability, people will want to follow you. They will want to be around you.
2. **Respect for Others** – Dictators and autocratic leaders rely on violence and intimidation to get people to do what they want. That's not really leadership. In contrast, good leaders rely on respect. When leaders show respect for others, they gain respect from others. And people want to follow people they respect greatly. If you continually respect others and consistently lead them well, you will continue to have followers.
3. **Courage** – Former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger remarked, "A leader does not deserve the name unless he is willing occasionally to stand alone." Good leaders do what's right, even at the risk of failure. I can't think of even one great leader from history who was without courage. A leader's courage has great value: it gives followers hope.
4. **Success** – Success is very attractive. People are naturally drawn to it. Success is even more important when it applies to the people who lead us. When leaders are successful in their own endeavors, people respect them. When they succeed in leading the team to victory, then followers believe they can do it again. As a result, followers follow them because they want to be a part of success in the future.
5. **Loyalty** – In a culture of constant change, turnover, and transition, loyalty is an asset. When leaders stick with the team until the job is done, remain loyal to the organization when the going gets rough, and look out for followers even when it hurts them, followers respect them and their actions.
6. **Value Added to Others** – Perhaps the greatest source of respect for a leader comes from his or her dedication to adding value to others. You can be sure that followers value leaders who add value to them. And their respect for them carries on long after the relationship has ended.

*When leaders are respected and they ask for commitment, their people step up and sign up. They are ready to take risks, charge the hill, put in long hours, or do whatever else is needed.*

*"A smile starts on the lips, a grin spreads to the eyes, a chuckle comes from the belly; but a good laugh bursts forth from the soul, overflows, and bubbles all around."*

Carolyn Birmingham

*"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do."*

Mark Twain

*"It is no coincidence that success often runs in families or among tight groups of friends. Greatness surrounds itself with greatness."*

Don Yaeger