



## Executive Mastery

... a TweedJeffries Company

# Are you ready for the responsibility of leadership?

Elizabeth Jeffries

CSP, CPAE

**M**ax DuPree, Chairman of Hermann Miller Corporation, and author of *Leadership is an Art*, says that “leadership is a serious meddling in other people’s lives. We need to take very seriously what it means to be a leader!”

I shared that quote with a new manager one time, and her raised eyebrows and open mouth showed she hadn’t thought of leadership like that before. The idea that as leaders people follow us, listen to what we say, and oftentimes mold their beliefs because of ours, was humbling to her. “Oh my,” she said, “This is a huge responsibility! Am I really ready for this?” Maybe none of us is ready for the responsibility of leadership but we can certainly prepare more for it.

People always ask how you “do” leadership. We want to be given lists, how-to’s and methods. We’re so busy that we often forget how to think, feel, and innovate! We do lots of tasks, race the clock, and go home finished, but not necessarily fulfilled.

In researching, working with, and writing about leaders for more than 20 years, I’m convinced we have lots of managers and not nearly enough leaders.

Managers control functions. In fact, the word *manager* comes from the Latin word *manus* or hand. It originally referred to the hands on the reins that held the horse. Managers control the systems and techniques that make an organization run.

Leaders! Now that’s another subject! Leaders influence people and convince them to do what

needs to be done. They establish direction and align people to work together. They move people to take action and inspire them with a shared vision of who they can be and what they can do! And you don’t have to be a manager to influence people!

Positive leaders on all levels come from a place of service. They esteem and value others by affirming them and making them feel significant. They make the way, show the way, and light the way! They believe in people and they help them grow by holding them accountable for their actions.

Larry Bossidy, CEO of Honeywell Corporation said, “At the end of the day, we bet on people, not strategy.”

A few years ago Forbes Magazine published a study on leaders. They found that 15% of people were considered natural born leaders, 15% will never be leaders and 70% can learn to lead. Yes, most leaders are made, not born, though they are seldom made as much by others as by themselves.

OK. I know you’re waiting for “the list,” so here it is. It’s offered as questions to **awaken** you to new ideas, **align** you with proven principles, motivate you to take **action** and encourage you to be **accountable**. It’s what leaders “do.”

- Have you discovered the mission and purpose for your own life and career? Can you define why you work and what legacy you want to leave in the world?
- Is your personal mission in alignment with that of your organization?

- On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best, how strong is your passion for your current career and your organization?
- What is your dream, your vision for where you want to go, both personally and professionally? Who knows your vision? Is it obvious to everyone you work with?
- Can you share the top three values that define who you are? How do these impact your leadership?
- Are you a skilled communicator? Can you clearly articulate your ideas and expectations? Do you read non-verbals and listen actively to understand what others need? Do you provide feedback and coaching?
- Are you committed to personal transformation? Are you a courageous change agent working toward the future, or are you a timid soul stuck in yesterday's beliefs and actions?

Learning to lead is a life long process that's layered. Like the Skin Horse said to the Velveteen Rabbit, "It doesn't happen all at once, you become." The idea is to keep looking in the mirror, identifying the changes you want to make, and doing something about them.

---

*Elizabeth Jeffries, CSP, CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame, works with leaders who want to master their influence and multiply their personal performance. She is a leadership consultant, executive coach, keynote speaker and author of several books, including The Heart of Leadership: How to Inspire, Encourage and Motivate People to Follow You. She can be reached in Louisville, KY at 502-339-1600, online at [elizabeth@tweedjeffries.com](mailto:elizabeth@tweedjeffries.com) and on the web at [www.tweedjeffries.com](http://www.tweedjeffries.com).*