

FOREWORD WRITTEN BY

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# CLIMB

**14 PROVEN STEPS FOR EMERGING  
LEADERS TO GROW AND ACHIEVE**

**BEN KENYON**

## Chapter Eleven

Be a Great Leader



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“Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure impact lasts in your absence.”

— Sheryl Sandberg

Learning how to be a great leader will significantly impact your personal and professional life. It's vital to understand which leadership qualities resonate with you, and which ones are necessary to nurture the environment for people you interact with everyday.

Remember in chapter two we discussed core values. As a high-performing leader, you will take on a lot of responsibility and pressure. Therefore, you need to recognize your strengths and weaknesses. The goal of this chapter is for you to understand what great leadership looks like, how you can emulate that and inspire others to be bold, authentic, and influential.

## Lead By Example

The world needs more leaders to take action and lead by example. I was blessed with the opportunity to work with one of the best athletes in the world, Damian Lillard. He led by example and his teammates followed his actions.

Dame's work ethic is unmatched! Even after all of the success from being one of the top 75 NBA players of all time, Rookie of the Year, and six-time All-Star, he still works like a rookie who is trying to prove himself. After each season he would take two weeks off, and get right back to the grind. Dame was establishing the expectations and culture for the rookies and new players on our team. They saw him putting in the work, and the players followed his lead. Ultimately, we were able to help the Portland Trail Blazers have major success, largely because of Dame's leadership.

## Qualities of a Great Leader

Remember, there is a difference between a boss and a leader. People have to work for a boss, they “choose” to follow a leader. Great leaders are intentional and lead with their values. You demonstrate your values and work ethic by how you walk and talk. It's important to be authentic and be yourself in every room. You are unique and there is no one else in the world like YOU!

My overall leadership style is collaborative and forward-thinking; however, I've learned to adjust my style in nearly twenty years of performance coaching. You can't manage or coach everyone in the same way because each individual learns differently.

The success of most organizations is built on strong interpersonal relationships because it helps to foster a culture of trust and collaboration. For instance, over the years, I've recognized when coaches and players didn't appear to understand this basic skill. They kept to themselves and didn't interact with others on a more genuine, personal level. As a leader, I encourage coaches and players to be more collaborative and get to know the entire team, which ultimately builds a deeper bond.

Influential leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela empowered others to succeed. This has to be your mindset as you plant seeds of success in other people. Take pride in the team and hype them up – no matter if they win or lose.

# Improving Your Leadership

I've outlined qualities of a great leader, but I want you to be able to identify areas where you can also strengthen your leadership. Be aware that everyone in a position of power or authority are not great leaders. Anyone can delegate, but that is not beneficial for personal growth and development.

Ineffective leaders allow their insecurities to turn into roadblocks. They aren't receptive to ideas that come from other people. Bottom line, the only opinion that matters is theirs. You should never be the smartest person in the room or in your inner circle. If you are, then how will you grow? Be open to new ideas even if they aren't yours. When your team brings new ideas to the table, hear them out because you want everyone to know and feel they have a voice. New ideas will make everyone better, so you should encourage the conversation.

Effective and transparent communication is essential in quality leadership. When you are straightforward with others, people will always know where you stand on an issue. Also, figure out the best ways to communicate with an individual or your team: in person, email, texts, etc. Determine their communication style and how it connects to yours, then meet somewhere in the middle on how to deliver the information.

You may have heard the saying, "People may forget what you have said, but they will always remember how you made them feel." When you are in a position of leadership or authority, don't tear people down. That's what poor leaders do. Praise in public and give constructive criticism in private. If someone does something outstanding, let them know. Celebrate the wins and learn from the mistakes.

I don't want to make this sound like it's easy, because it's certainly not. Even leaders make mistakes, that's part of the journey. Here's the difference: when you make a mistake, take ownership of it. That's when your emotional intelligence should kick in. Acknowledge your mistake, correct it, learn the lesson, then rebound!

## Action Steps to Climb

1. Name three core values that are important to you as a leader.
2. Identify one way you lead by example in your daily life.
3. Write down three ways to improve your leadership.



Great leaders are intentional and lead with their values.

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