

# PEOPLE

# LEADERSHIP

# 101

Answers to Questions

Emerging Leaders

Don't Know to Ask

Written by  
**GLEN SHARKEY**

**PEOPLE**

**LEADERSHIP**

**101.**

Copyright 2022: Glen Sharkey

[www.glensharkey.com](http://www.glensharkey.com) [www.thelifeworkscompany.com](http://www.thelifeworkscompany.com)

ISBN 978-0-473-63223-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication (including models) may be stored, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, scanning, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the expressed written permission of the author.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book, and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives to written sales material. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher or the author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including incidental, special, consequential or other.

# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife Jen, who has role modelled extreme self-leadership, and taught me the enormous value of 'self-awareness'. Awareness of self is the crucial first step to improved self-leadership, the cornerstone of one's ability to effectively lead others.

I am so grateful for your leadership.

# CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>X</b>
<b><u>SECTION 1– LS</u></b>	
<b>LEADING SELF.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LS1– EYES WIDE OPEN</b>	<b>4</b>
The importance of learning about leadership through observing the masters (and the disasters)	
<b>LS2– THE POWER OF PARTNERS</b>	<b>10</b>
The importance of surrounding yourself with supportive people	
<b>LS3– AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN'T SEE</b>	<b>16</b>
The importance of visionary leadership	
<b>LS4– A GOOD LOOK IN THE MIRROR</b>	<b>22</b>
The importance of self-awareness	
<b>LS5– IN ALL HONESTY</b>	<b>28</b>
The importance of vulnerability	
<b>LS6– IT'S NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES</b>	<b>36</b>
The importance of being able to balance fun and professionalism	
<b>LS7– COMFORTABLE DISCOMFORT</b>	<b>42</b>
The importance of constantly stepping outside your comfort zone	
<b>LS8– TIME ALONE WILL TELL</b>	<b>48</b>
The importance of generating support for yourself	

<b>LS9– NOT BEING A KNOW-IT-ALL</b>	<b>54</b>
The importance of knowing you don't have to know everything	
<b>LS10– YOU'RE NUMBER 1! (WHAT?!?)</b>	<b>60</b>
The importance of looking after yourself	
<b>LS11– MANAGE YOUR EGO</b>	<b>66</b>
The importance of ego management	
<b>LS12– A FIRM BELIEF IN FAIRNESS</b>	<b>72</b>
The importance of being “firm but fair”	
<b>LS13– INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>78</b>
The importance of being an “inspirer” regardless of your personality type	
<b>LS14– A CLEAR TARGET IN MIND</b>	<b>84</b>
The importance of clarity around roles and goals	
<b>LS15– THE NO. 1 PIECE OF ADVICE</b>	<b>90</b>
The importance of building a great relationship with a mentor	

## **SECTION 2–LT**

### **LEADING THE TEAM. 96**

#### **LT1– GREAT USE OF TIME 98**

The importance of time management and delegation

#### **LT2– LISTEN TO WHAT'S NOT SAID 104**

The importance of listening (and making people feel listened to)

<b>LT3– SPEAKING WITHOUT WORDS</b>	<b>110</b>
The importance of not just what you say, but how you say it	
<b>LT4– FRIEND VS FRIENDLINESS</b>	<b>116</b>
The importance of being respect versus being liked	
<b>LT5– NOT WHAT YOU KNOW...</b>	<b>122</b>
The importance of really getting to know your team	
<b>LT 6– DON'T BLAME THE TOOLS</b>	<b>128</b>
The importance of owning performance	
<b>LT7– ON THE SAME PAGE</b>	<b>134</b>
The importance of clear instructions - telling isn't the same as understanding	
<b>LT8– YOU'RE TELLING THE STORY!</b>	<b>140</b>
The importance of story-telling in leadership	
<b>LT9– JUST OWN IT!</b>	<b>148</b>
The importance of taking ownership when it feels counterintuitive	
<b>LT10– LEADING DREAMERS</b>	<b>154</b>
The importance of understanding your team's aspirations	
<b>LT11– WHEN CREDIT MEANS LOSS</b>	<b>160</b>
The importance of being wary of claiming the credit	
<b>LT12– RESPONDING IN KIND</b>	<b>164</b>
The importance of kindness as a leadership trait	
<b>LT13– CULTURAL CHAMPION</b>	<b>170</b>
The importance of building great team culture	



## **LT14– THE PROMISE OF PROMOTION** **176**

The importance of not making promises you can't fulfil

## **LT15– SERVE SOMEONE RIGHT** **182**

The importance of servant leadership

## **LT16– FRESH MESSAGING** **188**

The importance of variety in keeping communications from going stale

## **LT17– ON A POSITIVE NOTE** **194**

The importance of showing your team recognition and appreciation

## **SECTION 3– LB**

## **LEADING THE BIG PICTURE** **200**

### **LB1– VALUABLE LEADERSHIP** **202**

The importance of utilising the company values

### **LB2– FIRST THINGS FIRST** **208**

The importance of correct prioritising in terms of the organisation, the team, and individuals

### **LB3– LEADERSHIP UP'S AND DOWN'S** **214**

The importance of prioritising your vertical vs your horizontal team

### **LB4– INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE** **220**

The importance of leaders avoiding the use of "them and us"

<b>LB5– DISAGREE TO AGREE</b>	<b>224</b>
The importance of maintaining a unified front with management	
<b>LB6– AGENTS OF CHANGE</b>	<b>230</b>
The importance of positively embracing change (rather than just accepting it)	
<b>LB7– POSITIVITY IN SPADES</b>	<b>236</b>
The importance of modelling a “can-do” attitude	
<b>FINAL WORD</b>	<b>242</b>

# PREFACE

This book has been a long time in the making, and in no way is it a reflection of my own, exemplary leadership. I've possibly made more (and dumber) mistakes than most when it comes to leading people, and like so many, I too was thrown in the deep end in my early twenties to manage a group of people, a number of whom were older than me at the time.

One embarrassing (and somewhat horrifying) story of that time will live with me forever as a reminder of one of the principles in this book - "Leadership needs to be respected, not necessarily liked".

I was in my first tutoring position, teaching driver's licence theory and practice to mostly young (and many 'at risk') people with low educational qualifications. Every Thursday we would go for a social outing such as mini golf or the public pools. On this occasion we had planned to go ten pin bowling, but for whatever reason we had no large van booked to transport the 8 students on this particular Thursday.

The students were adamant that we should still go, despite the lack of available transport, and not wanting to disappoint them (cue "needing to be liked"), they managed to convince me to take my own car - with nine of us in it! When it was clear that we could only really squeeze seven into the car, two young guys offered to go in the boot (or trunk if we were in the United States). They popped it open, and both got in to prove that it was possible, which was the point at which I had my "WTF" ("Wow, This is not Fantastic") moment, and said - "This is too unsafe, everyone out - sorry, but bowling isn't happening today guys!"

Seeing those two young students crammed into the boot and imagining the carnage if a car had run into the back of us was a real wake-up

moment for me, and a turning point in the battle of “being liked” versus “being respected”. I just wish someone had shared with me on the eve of that first leadership role, “Sharkey, it’s clear that you like getting on well with people, and you’ll be tempted on many occasions to say and do things with the key driver of ‘being liked’ which is likely to cause you to do inappropriate things to fulfil that driver. Instead, focus on what’s good for the organisation, your team, and for the individuals. This might not always be the most popular choice, but in the end, you’ll be respected for those decisions and actions, and that’s far more important than being liked.”

But that person who could share those words of wisdom with me was either absent, or they didn’t understand the need to guide me, particularly in those early days. This book is written in the hope that as an emerging people leader, you’ll avoid many of the mistakes of previous people in the early stages of your leadership journey by understanding key concepts such as:

1. The need to be respected, rather than liked (LT4)
2. Prioritising the organisational needs first, then the needs of the team, then the needs and wants of individuals in the team (LB3)
3. The value of building a relationship with a mentor, who can act as a sounding board for difficult scenarios and decisions (LS15).

And if you have emerging leaders under your care, then this book can also offer you clarity around key concepts that you should be instilling in your charges as a mentor.

May your leadership journey be long, enjoyable, and rewarding.

**GLEN SHARKEY**

**“Instead, focus on what’s good for the organisation, your team, and for the individuals. This might not always be the popular choice, but in the end, you’ll be respected for those decisions and actions, and that’s far more important than being liked.”**

– GLEN SHARKEY



# PEOPLE LEADERSHIP 101.

Answers to Questions  
Emerging Leaders  
Don't Know to Ask

WRITTEN BY  
**GLEN SHARKEY**



**SECTION 1– LS**

**LEADING**

**SELF.**

# LS1– EYES WIDE OPEN

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ABOUT LEADERSHIP THROUGH OBSERVING THE MASTERS (AND THE DISASTERS)

Something happens to you when you step up to leading people, or at least something should happen in the same way that a first-time father or mother should feel an innate increase in the sense of responsibility when their first child is born. Moving from being part of the team to leading a team should bring about not only a shift but an increase in your sense of responsibility. When that day comes, it is not simply about your performance but about your ability to influence your team members to get the best possible performance out of them also.

If you're reading this book because you sense at some point in your career you will hold a leadership position, but are currently simply a member of the team, one of the ways that you can prepare yourself for this step up into leadership is by increasingly considering the day-to-day affairs of the business through the lens of your boss, your team leader, your supervisor, or your manager. It won't entirely give you the full picture, but you will notice your perspective change when you begin to consider the following elements through the lens of leadership:

- The rationale for leadership decisions - why did they make 'that' decision?
- The impact of those decisions on the business and on levels of productivity
- The profitability of the business
- The impact on your company because of industry disruptors

- The impact of the behaviours and attitudes of individuals and the wider team
- How your boss differentiates herself or himself from simply being a member of the team, and especially how they approach the requirement of being a role model
- Various leadership styles of different managers including how they adapt their style to a variety of scenarios
- Taking the time to observe these aspects of the business through the lens of leadership will give you a head start in understanding in what ways life is likely to be different for you stepping up from being a member of the team into a leadership role. And you don't have to observe great managers in order to learn leadership lessons. If you have a boss, or have bosses in your orbit that are less than effective, there's still lots to be learnt by asking yourself: "What's not so effective about their leadership, and how might I manage differently when I'm a people leader?"

# LS1 Q&A

1. To what extent do you observe the leadership behaviours of managers around you in order to learn from them?

---

---

---

---

2. What are the mindset and behaviours that you've observed of managers that you admire?

---

---

---

---

3. What can you do to develop a practice of observing effective (and not so effective) management in a more intentional way?

---

---

---

---



**You can learn so much about leadership, free of charge, by observing effective (and not so effective) leadership.**

**LS1 IN A NUTSHELL**



# LS2– THE POWER OF PARTNERS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE

*If you want to go fast, go alone.*

*If you want to go far, go together.*

*African Proverb*

There's a saying that "Leadership can be a lonely place". Although there are many rewarding aspects to effective leadership, it can sometimes be discouraging being in a position where you have to resource yourself and lead others through trying times. This is one significant way in which leadership differs from simply being a team member - where disappointment and discouragement can be shared amongst peers. In the event that you are unable to share your discouragement with your immediate manager, then you'll have to manage those challenging feelings in a resilient fashion.

There is some truth to the saying that: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger". Although that's not entirely true, you will learn and grow a lot with the trials of leadership in the same way that resistance training over time builds muscle and strength. There are countless leaders who will tell you numerous stories of where they've felt like giving up and throwing in the towel, but they didn't. When they look back now on those trying times and consider those early leadership challenges in their career, those feelings are nowhere near as ominous as when they experienced them. And although it is the case that sometimes leadership can feel like a very lonely vocation, you don't have to go it alone.

I was delivering leadership training to a group of millennials in the

service industry, and I heard from management that one of their star performers had something of a meltdown and left the business overnight. It was such a shame that this bright star had felt so overwhelmed with the pressures both in work and his personal life but had not reached out to his very supportive management who could have easily guided him through the difficult patch. As Winston Churchill said: “Success is not final, failure is not fatal”. Success doesn’t last forever, and neither does failure, but because this emerging leader never shared his struggles with management (and a ‘burden shared is a burden halved’) they weren’t able to give him an objective perspective or any great advice for navigating his way through what he would one day look back on as a small storm.

It’s important for the success of your leadership journey to surround yourself, both in the business and outside the business, with people who can cheer you on when you are doing well, and who can also guide and support you when times get tough.

# LS2 Q&A

1. Do you tend to be someone who prides themselves on being independent?

---

---

---

---

2. What implications might this have for soliciting assistance from others in your new leadership role?

---

---

---

---

3. What are the advantages for you of soliciting support from others for your leadership growth?

---

---

---

---



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the local context in which a project is implemented. This includes a thorough analysis of the social, economic, and cultural factors that may influence the success or failure of the intervention. It is essential to engage with the community from the outset, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are addressed. This participatory approach not only fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among the community members but also allows for the identification of potential challenges and the development of strategies to mitigate them.

In addition, the paper highlights the need for a clear and realistic assessment of the resources available, both human and financial. This involves a detailed budgeting process that takes into account the costs of personnel, materials, and other resources required for the project. It is also important to establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the project, using both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the impact of the intervention. Regular communication and reporting to the community and stakeholders are crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability.

The second part of the paper focuses on the implementation of the project, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and adaptability. As the project progresses, it is likely that unforeseen challenges will arise, and it may be necessary to adjust the plan accordingly. This requires a willingness to listen to feedback and make changes as needed. The paper also discusses the importance of building strong relationships with the community and other stakeholders, as this can facilitate the implementation of the project and ensure that it is sustainable in the long term.

Finally, the paper concludes by discussing the importance of reflection and learning from the experience. This involves a thorough evaluation of the project's outcomes, identifying what worked well and what did not, and using this information to inform future projects. The paper emphasizes that the ultimate goal of the project is to create a positive and lasting impact on the community, and this can only be achieved through a combination of careful planning, effective implementation, and a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement.

**When (not if) you go through  
leadership challenges, don't  
go through them alone.**

**LS2 IN A NUTSHELL**

# LS3– AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN'T SEE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

I have met so many new team leaders, supervisors, and those in frontline management roles, who have either not been told, and/or are completely unaware of the need to be a “vision caster”. This term describes someone who has a vision of the future and is able to ‘cast’ or present it to the team in such a way that it captures their hearts and minds. Capturing people’s hearts and minds’ is a phrase that has become increasingly popular in leadership circles over the last few years.

There are two criteria to be a vision caster. The first is obviously to have a vision. This could be a vision for the nature of the team that you’re leading, of the performance that you believe they are capable of, of how they may work more effectively with other parts of the business, of how you may deal more effectively with clients and customers, or any number of ways in which the team could grow tangibly. This vision may have come directly from your manager, it may be entirely your own vision, or a combination of the two.

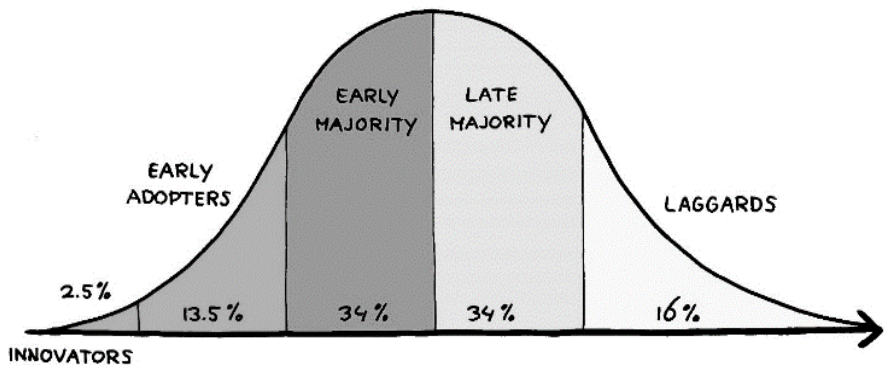
Regardless of when you signed up for leadership, and more importantly effective leadership, you signed up to be someone who needed to have a very clear vision of the destination of the team in however many months or years’ time.

Obviously having a vision is only half the equation. The second aspect is selling it to the team to the point that it becomes their vision also.

It's important to understand the various personality types in your team because this information will help you know which people need what kind of information delivered in what fashion in order to get on board. For instance, some members of your team may really respond to a charismatic and inspiring speech about your vision for the future. People with the opposite personality type may be a lot less interested in this “froth and bubble” and much more interested in the cold, hard facts and figures of the vision. Others may simply want to know when we're going to get underway, and still others want to see a more collaborative approach with the team having input into how the vision will be achieved, if not into the very vision itself.

This next point is really worth taking note of if you feel overwhelmed with the idea of having to get everyone onboard from day one. You don't.

Marketing theory provides a useful model for understanding the ‘acceptance stages’ of various types of people within a population group (including the team you're leading). The model follows the line of a normally distributed bell curve in terms of the acceptance rates by consumers of new products and services.



The bell curve is split into five sections with the bulk of the population sitting in the middle section described as the “Majority”. On the far left-hand side of the bell curve is what marketing theorists call the



“Innovators”. These are the kinds of people who are hungry for change and are always the first to purchase and trial the latest and greatest products and services. In a close second place to the innovators are the “Early Adopters”. They’re not the first out of the blocks in terms of adopting, for example, new technologies, but once a trend starts, they’re the next group to get on board. The bulk of the bell curve, the “Majority”, is divided into two categories - early and late. Then at the tail end of the bell curve are the antithesis of the innovators and early adopters - the ‘Late Adopters’, or the “Laggards” who actively avoid adopting new concepts and products until they have little or no choice but to join everyone else.

The adoption of “The New” in business also replicates this bell curve to a lesser or greater degree. You will get those who come onboard with a new vision early, just like innovators and early adopters, followed by the majority of the team, and then you may encounter some laggards who may not ever fully get onboard, or will at least drag their feet on the way.

The point of this marketing model in relation to your first experience as a leader, and as a vision caster, is to not anticipate or expect that everyone will get onboard at the same pace. It’s okay to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of a small number initially, and they can assist you in winning over the hearts and minds of the majority. The important thing is not to give up on any momentum because you haven’t got everyone. onboard. Some people just need more time than others.

# LS3 Q&A

1. What experience have you had previously with communicating vision to others?

---

---

---

---

2. What challenges do you think you'll face in communicating your vision to your team?

---

---

---

---

3. What benefits will there be if your team achieves (or exceeds) your vision?

---

---

---

---

**Teams adopt change**

**at different rates.**

**LS3 IN A NUTSHELL**

# LS4– A GOOD LOOK IN THE MIRROR

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-AWARENESS

In the ‘Above and Below the Line’ model, (popularised in the book “The Oz Principle”) people are presented with a challenge that they could or should take responsibility for. They then make a choice to either avoid responsibility using ‘Below the Line’ strategies such as defensiveness, blaming, making excuses, deflecting responsibility and denial. Conversely, ‘Above the Line’ responses lead to accepting responsibility and ownership and working actively to resolve the issue. The model identifies the first step in the ‘Above the Line’ chain of responses as ‘awareness’. It’s not possible to take responsibility or ownership for an issue that you’re unaware of, and it’s the antithesis of the ‘Below the Line’ behaviour of denial.

As a people leader you will accelerate your leadership journey by proactively seeking opportunities to expose yourself to areas of your leadership (and life) that you could be taking more responsibility for in terms of self-improvement. The term ‘self-awareness’ is something of a misnomer, because often self-awareness comes through the valued input of others who can see what we’re unable to see - effectively our blind spots. The Johari model explains this well with four types of knowledge:

1. What we know about ourselves that others know about us (common knowledge)
2. What we know about ourselves that others don’t (our private lives)

3. What neither we nor others know about us
4. What others know about us that we don't know about ourselves

It's this last quadrant in the Johari model that offers us the greatest opportunity for growth - our blind spots that others can see that we can't. This requires us having people in our lives, both work and personal, whom we trust and respect. They are able to give us objective and meaningful feedback in a safe and caring manner that can help us not only become more self-aware but offer some accountability in those areas that require self-improvement.

Self-awareness can also come from:

- Reading and watching material that exposes us to higher level thinking e.g., autobiographies, business texts, leadership material, audio books, TED talks etc.
- Watching others through a critical lens. Not critical in the sense of critiquing them to put them down, but critical in the sense of looking at people through an active, rather than passive lens and asking questions like: "What can I learn from their behaviour? What is it that is so effective or ineffective about how they communicate? What aspects of their conduct may reflect on my behaviour and how it could change?"

Leaders that lack self-awareness are hard work. They're not easy to respect, and nor are they easy to trust. A journey of self-awareness is not always an easy one, and confronting weaknesses and personal demons can be uncomfortable, even painful. But that short-term pain will lead to the long-term gain of effective leadership and easier relationships, whereas avoiding self-reflection may be a short-term gain, but you'll pay for it in the long run.

# LS4 Q&A

1. How would you rate your self-awareness out of 10? Why would you give yourself that score?

---

---

---

---

2. In what areas would you benefit from increased self-awareness as a people leader?

---

---

---

---

3. Who could help you with increasing self-awareness in the areas above?

---

---

---

---





**The journey of self-awareness  
may be a short-term pain, but  
it will deliver long-term gains  
that make it worthwhile.**

**LS4 IN A NUTSHELL**