

## Leadership Action Guide

Our Mission at Zenie Foundation is to Help Students Become Effective Adults. We describe the key attributes of effective adults at [zeniefoundation.org/values](https://zeniefoundation.org/values). Beyond this, however, we hope that our effective adults will lead others: family, friends, career colleagues and community, to become more effective.

Leaders are often defined as people who control organizational units. What a terrible definition! Being a boss, doesn't make you a leader nor does the title Manager; they do, however, create the expectation of leadership.

When discussing leadership, people frequently try to identify the personal characteristics that will make them effective leaders. Don't be fooled; charisma, appearance, and good communications skills do not create effective leaders.

The true definition is: Leadership is a process of interpersonal influence which motivates others toward achieving a shared goal. You become a leader only when people want to follow you.

### Leadership Is About Ideas & Vision - Not Control

A potential leader develops a vision describing a future desired condition. Vision creates leadership opportunities when the people around you think:

- That's a worthy idea; and
- I'd like to go there; and
- How can I help?

If people decide to follow you, you become obligated to lead the way and remain true to your vision. If you are a chosen leader, you must organize and lead the work needed to reach your vision, by:

- Building a team committed to the vision; and
- Seeking and instilling values and culture that build trust

Effective leaders also make good followers. They recognize and respect great ideas and visions, and understand the work and obligations of leading. They are motivated by worthy visions and values, not by personal ego.

### Vision & Trust *Enable* Leadership

You can bully peoples' behavior for a while, but you can't bully their minds and their will. You can con for a while, but you ultimately will be exposed. Long-term leaders are authentic.

Organizations that lack a worthy vision can be managed but not led. Worthy visions energize and motivate people to want to be part of them. Leaders instill cultural values and build trust: it's simple and pragmatic; How you live - Is who you are.

Imagine back to June 6, 1944 – the Allied invasion of Europe at Normandy. We landed 150,000 troops from the US, Britain and Canada. The weather stunk, the original invasion plans failed, the generals and admirals were offshore without communications and there were untold Germans shooting at and paralyzing our troops who were unprotected on the beach. Some number of very young soldiers recognized that Hitler was evil and that we needed success to begin the end of Nazi Germany. With this vision, they stood up, faced the enemy guns and said to those around them, "Follow Me" Many were gunned down in their first few steps but the vision prevailed, and it was the beginning of the end.

Our ZF Vision is simple:

**A passion for creating worthy outcomes, not a pre-defined state.  
We will become what our students need us to be.**

We often link our ideas with Stephen Covey's, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

#### **Covey's First 5 Habits**

Be Proactive  
Begin with the End in Mind  
Put First Things First  
Think Win/win  
Seek First to be Understood...  
then to Understand

#### **Zenie Foundation**

Vision  
Mission > Vision in Action  
Always be faithful to your vision, mission & values  
Advance with passion, learn from experience.  
Avoid denial, discover reality & change or accept it  
Never forget: our students are our customers.

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Let's close with the powerful example of Martin Luther King. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, 52 years ago as I write this, and yet, he still leads us today. How is this possible? On August 28, 1963, he delivered his most famous speech, "I Have a Dream," featuring this excerpt of his ideas:

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.  
And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.  
I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

Dr. King is gone but his ideas and vision are clear and they still inspire.

Leaders will emerge. Lead when appropriate. Support worthy Visions and Values.