

# Two Things Every Leader Needs to Be Willing and Able to Do

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## Change things

Leaders are change agents. If you are leaving everything as it is and are reluctant to change what, to many, obviously needs changing, you are not leading the way you should. Leaders look down the road and see could be and must be. In their mind's eye, they see things which aren't reality yet and set about to change how things are currently being done or bring a brand-new idea into being.

Professor John Kotter, Harvard Business School, in his excellent book, *Leading Change* shares an 8-fold process when initiating change which I have shared with dozens of leaders:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad-based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

The problem of course is that, generally speaking, people do not like change. I have heard it said that only a baby likes change, but even they sometimes cry when you change a diaper. Leaders are never completely satisfied with the status quo and are restless for change. That is what makes them a leader. Not change for change sake but change in order to bring something better to fruition.

*"What defines a leader is his/her preoccupation with the future. Leaders are fascinated by the future. As a leader you are never satisfied with the present, because in your head you can see a better future."* ~ Marcus Buckingham

And because leaders see a better future which would be a win/win for everyone, not just for them, leaders are motivated to make changes to bring that better future to current reality. Now the leader needs wisdom in *what* to change, good communication in *how* to implement the change and proper timing as to *when* to attempt the change, especially a major change.

## Decide things

Leaders make decisions. That is what leaders do. The more responsibility you have as a leader, the more is riding on every decision you make, and more people can be disappointed

and upset over your decision. It doesn't really matter how much time, effort and due diligence you invest in the decision; I can guarantee you that some will like it, and some will not. You are never going to keep everybody happy with decisions you make. "If your goal in life is to keep everybody happy, don't be a leader, sell ice cream" ~ Eric Geiger. Do your homework, pray, think, get good feedback from those affected by your decision and then decide. I have said for years that two critical questions that need to be answered for every group, organization and church are:

1. How are decisions made in your organization?
2. Who has the ultimate decision-making authority?

You can pretty well count on trouble somewhere down the road if the answer to either of this question is, "Well it's not really all that clear."

A number of years ago I ran across the following from Ted Engstrom which has been of immense help to me in making important leadership decisions.

- Don't make decisions under stress
- Don't make snap decisions
- Don't drag your feet
- Do Consult other people
- Don't try to anticipate everything
- Don't be afraid of making a wrong decision
- Once the decision is made, go ahead to something else

I have discovered that major decisions fall into three distinct groupings:

1. Directional ~Where are we heading and how do we intend to get there?
2. Financial ~ How will we allocate funds as we travel toward our preferred future?
3. Personnel ~ Who do we need on the team to help us get there?

Another way to frame it is:

1. Where are we going? -Direction
2. Why are we going there? -Purpose
3. Who is going with us? -Team
4. How will we get there? -Strategy

My fellow leader, for the glory of Jesus, do not be afraid to initiate needed changes and don't shy away from the difficult decisions. Making changes and making decisions is what leadership is all about.