

# You Don't Need a Cape to Be a Hero to Your People

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Hero can be a relative term. It can conjure images of stilled action in the pages of a comic book or computer-generated images on the big screen of good versus evil. For those who live in the real world, the relevance is much more practical and actual.

Heroes lift the souls of those who read about their stories of bravery and the causes they champion at every turn of the page. Villainy must be vanquished, just as the challenges in everyday life we all face.

No cape required. There are **nine “superpowers”** each aspiring leader can employ that will help him or her be the champion people need and deserve.

## 1. The Power of Vision

It all starts with something better. Or, at least, it should. That's the power of vision. Vision is simply a snapshot, or image, of a preferable future. It's the way things can be, ought to be, and will be, if impassionedly pursued.

The concept of heroes and their sense of idealism represents something more. Something better. It can help us see beyond the now into our best tomorrow. Vision is the ability and awareness that prompted non-powered individuals to create, invent, and otherwise shape the future in truly remarkable ways.

## 2. The Strength to Win

No matter the story, foe, or situation, each hero, we believe, will eventually prove to be the champion we all knew he or she could be. The certainty and anticipation of victory is tied to the strength every hero displays, even in the face of dire straits or great adversity. This is just one reason heroes are so celebrated and revered.

The strength to win is an attitude and a spirit that will not allow a person to live under the circumstances but rise above them with a resilient refusal to lose.

## 3. The Value of Trust

Trust is not automatic. It must be earned, not given.

We trust another because we learn, over time, that he or she is worthy of it. We know they will do the right thing, every time. We trust those who come through, over and over, and we freely relate with, absent of any doubt, those who work hard to protect and cherish that confidence.

We confide in another because we've given ourselves permission to do so. Otherwise, we simply look elsewhere or, if given no choice, offer as much trust as the situation deserves and hope for the best.

For the heroic leader, trust is the foundation on which everything else is built. When trust is secure, communication is healthy, productivity is higher, as is morale, and the opportunities for group success are more readily available.

#### **4. The Price of Prowess**

You have to give up to go up—John Maxwell. Leadership is a skill that can be taught and developed. It's not magic. It's not mystically bestowed. Every leader possesses some prowess, but it's not easily or lazily expanded.

Measure of influence is determined by the current degree of leadership. We all have a ceiling that doesn't, and shouldn't, remain permanent. Many never leave what could be described as entry-level or positional.

Don't get stuck. Challenge your competency and work to grow.

#### **5. The Passion of a Just Cause**

Everyone needs a cause. Everyone needs a calling bigger than self, a passion that will not only energize their life but change someone else's. Without it, the sense of merely existing takes hold, and one simply takes up space until the end. Not enough are driven by a strong sense of mission, purpose, or a reason that produces a call that must be answered with enthusiasm and passion on a daily basis.

While each life has a definite purpose, causes can be presented at various times in alignment with one's mission and calling. Every life is a story waiting to be told. A great commitment to a great cause will build a great life and speak volumes to the world about who you are, what you believe, and the difference you want to make.

Never make a first-class commitment to a second-class cause.

#### **6. The Reality of Hope**

You can survive 40 days without food, three days without water, and eight minutes without air. You can't honestly survive a single second without hope. Hope is as vital as the air we breathe. Without it, life becomes an exercise in finding as many ways as possible to cope or just get by. People no longer thrive. They merely survive.

Every leader can authentically present the reality of hope that will spur their team forward despite, and even because of, hard seasons.

## **7. The Honor of Fighting Fair**

Conflict is inevitable. It can't be avoided. When people attempt to, with a head in the sand approach, the conflict that inevitably surfaces is worsened by a lack of readiness. The typical manager spends 25–40% of his or her time dealing with workplace conflict. Another term for this is putting out fires.

While conflict can't be eluded, it doesn't have to be ruinous. Disagreements, if handled properly, can make a team better, not bitter. This requires attacking the issues, however, not each other.

## **8. The Leveling of Calm**

No one gets to choose when moments of stress and difficulty occur. While we can't control when bad moments will strike, one can control what to do with them and what happens next. This is what separates the mature leader, the heroic leader, from the average person who never rises above impulsively reacting to bad situations instead of carefully responding.

## **9. The Heart to Serve**

Heroic leadership is not power over people, but power with people. It's paradoxical, but true greatness comes from proving to be the least, in so much as expressing a willingness to consider others as much as self. People hate pretense and can usually see through a façade. Serving others, especially those you lead, must be genuine. The main question is, "Do I care about the people I've been blessed to lead, or do I only care about getting the job done?"