

Why Do You Want to Lead?

Bob Vanourek

Why do you want to lead? It's important to know that—important to your future and to those you lead.

Leading Is a Choice

You may get thrust into a position of authority when a vacuum exists. Most times, though, leadership is a choice you make. If offered, you can agree to step into a position of authority. You can choose.

You can also choose to **lead without a title or formal authority**. Knowing why you want to lead is important when you have a choice to make.

Leadership is hard. It involves motivating people and driving change—guiding people to work together toward a better future. Many people will resist such attempts to drive change.

Leading may drain you emotionally and physically. It may affect your health. Leadership can also be wonderfully gratifying if done for the right reasons.

There are worthy motives to lead and questionable motives to lead.

Questionable Motives to Lead

Questionable motives to lead can be dangerous to you and others.

Some people just want to be a boss, getting ahead of others, and telling others what to do. They want to be in charge, in control, pulling the levers of change. They may like the power of being able to reward and punish people. Their mantra is often “my way or the highway.”

Some people **want to lead for the status**, compensation packages, and perquisites often given to executives. They're seduced by material benefits.

Some people want the **prestige and accolades** that can come with leading. They crave being the center of attention to validate them. And they revel in the praise they receive.

Do any of these motives apply to you? If so, be warned.

These are **leadership derailers**. They're temptations that will likely harm you and the people who work for you. You may have authority over your team, but you won't have their hearts, trust, or commitment. They won't give you their all, and they won't trust you.

Leadership Derailers Assessment

Take this assessment to identify what's inhibiting your leadership effectiveness. It will help you develop self-awareness and identify ways to improve your leadership.

Take the Assessment

People aren't blind. They will likely see that you're in it for yourself. They'll see the power and prestige you crave or your need for recognition and praise.

With such questionable motives, your days as a leader will likely be numbered. You'll fail to achieve what you need to because your followers will comply with you only begrudgingly.

Meanwhile, you will also have stifled their ability to grow, thrive, and reach their potential, because they'll be shut down by your selfish motives.

Worthy Motives to Lead

On the flipside, there are noble and honorable reasons to want to lead.

You may have a passion for a cause or a unique talent. If your passion or talent is recognized by the people above you in your organization, they may ask you to take on a position of greater authority or lead on a specific project.

More importantly, you'll have the trust and support of those you lead. They will commit to follow you. Your chances for success will be much higher because of their enthusiastic support.

Worthy motives to lead involve being focused on the people you'll lead, not yourself. The best leadership is not **ego-driven**.

Worthy leadership is about **helping people get to a better place**—improving their circumstances, unleashing their capabilities, and helping them develop their own leadership skills. Great leadership is a **group performance**, not a solo act. It **unleashes others** to develop agency, take initiative, and lead when they have the capabilities and desire to do so.

Worthy leadership truly cares about the people being led. It doesn't see them as means to satisfy one's own