

LEADING PEOPLE AND CHANGE

**Presenter: Dr. D. Christopher Kayes, Professor of Management,
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Leadership

Video Transcript

[TEXT: YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE
ONLINE TRAINING SERIES]

[TEXT: LEADERSHIP: Leading People and Change]

[TEXT: Learning Objectives

1. Describe leadership as the process of helping create positive change.
2. Describe how leadership can occur anywhere individuals find creative solution to problems.
3. Explain the three factors that all leaders need to understand.]

[TEXT: Dr. D. Christopher Kayes, Professor of Management, George Washington University]

What is a leader?

We have three learning objectives in this session. First, describe that a leader is someone who helps creates positive change. Two, describe how leaders are not only those at the top of the organization, but leaders are those individuals who help to find creative solutions to problems. And three, explain the three factors that all leaders need to understand.

Leaders are everywhere. At all corners of the globe, in all types of organizations, doing all types of work. Anyone who seeks to make the world a better place is a leader.

Leaders are those who seek to make change. In politics, in business or society, leaders always find themselves at the heart of change. Leaders help people, organizations and societies navigate this change and help people find a better way to do things.

One popular myth about leadership is that leaders are only the ones sitting at the top of an organization. A CEO of a major company, the president of a nation or a champion leading social change. These are all leaders, but you don't have to have a formal title or role to be a leader. Leaders are those people who are able to influence others towards reaching a goal, completing a mission or creating new ideas. Leaders are people who institute change, influence a situation or can bring creative problem solving to existing problems.

In short, leaders are those who advocate for positive change.

Because leaders are always on the forefront of change, leaders find themselves in situations that are complex and dynamic. Complex situations require leaders to consider multiple factors when solving a problem.

Leaders need to work with different groups of individuals, even when those groups of individuals may have competing interests. The leader finds ways to get these diverse groups to work together,



and a leader takes action so that these different groups can continue to operate independently while minimizing conflict.

Leaders not only face complex situations and need to navigate many different interests, but leaders must learn to work in the face of constantly changing situations. As one leadership expert described it: “Today’s solution is tomorrow’s problem.” Solutions to problems are often short-lived because situations change. Leaders prepare themselves for constant change and need to be adaptable.

Most leaders are in a mode of constant learning searching for new and better ways to solve a problem. Because leaders are always on the forefront of change, they’re always faced with problems that have never been solved before. Leaders always understand that they are facing problems with few simple solutions. The successful leader is always looking for new ways to solve problems.

Some ideas for leadership development include: one, seek out ways to learn new skills. Learning skills such as communication, networking, writing a vision statement are all useful skills for leaders.

Two, find others to mentor you and others that you can mentor. Other people may have a skill that you admire. Learn from them. Be generous with your knowledge and teach other people what you know.

Three, understand your own faults and your own strengths. Seek out ways to improve your faults. For example, if you do not like public speaking, actively seek out opportunities to practice public speaking.

Four, talk to leaders in your profession, community and organization. Learn their stories, and some of the hardships that they overcame and the opportunities that they took advantage of in their quest to become better leaders.

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