

# THE DNA OF A LE8DER

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## WHAT MAKES UP A LEADER?

#Le8derDNA





"Leadership is the sunlight  
required for growth"

Often times we think of leadership as something you are born with. We say things like "he/she is a natural born leader." Well, I am here to tell you that this just simply is not always the case.

While it's true that some people are further along the pathway of leadership, or it does come more naturally to them, it is not an exclusive club.

We all have what it take to become better leaders. Whether we are wanting to lead a team, a business, a project, or just our family; leadership is a key component to the success of your goals.

I am going to give you the framework of what it takes to unlock that potential within you, and develop good leadership habits that you can use to create your own Le8der DNA!



**IT STARTS  
WITH HARD  
WORK**

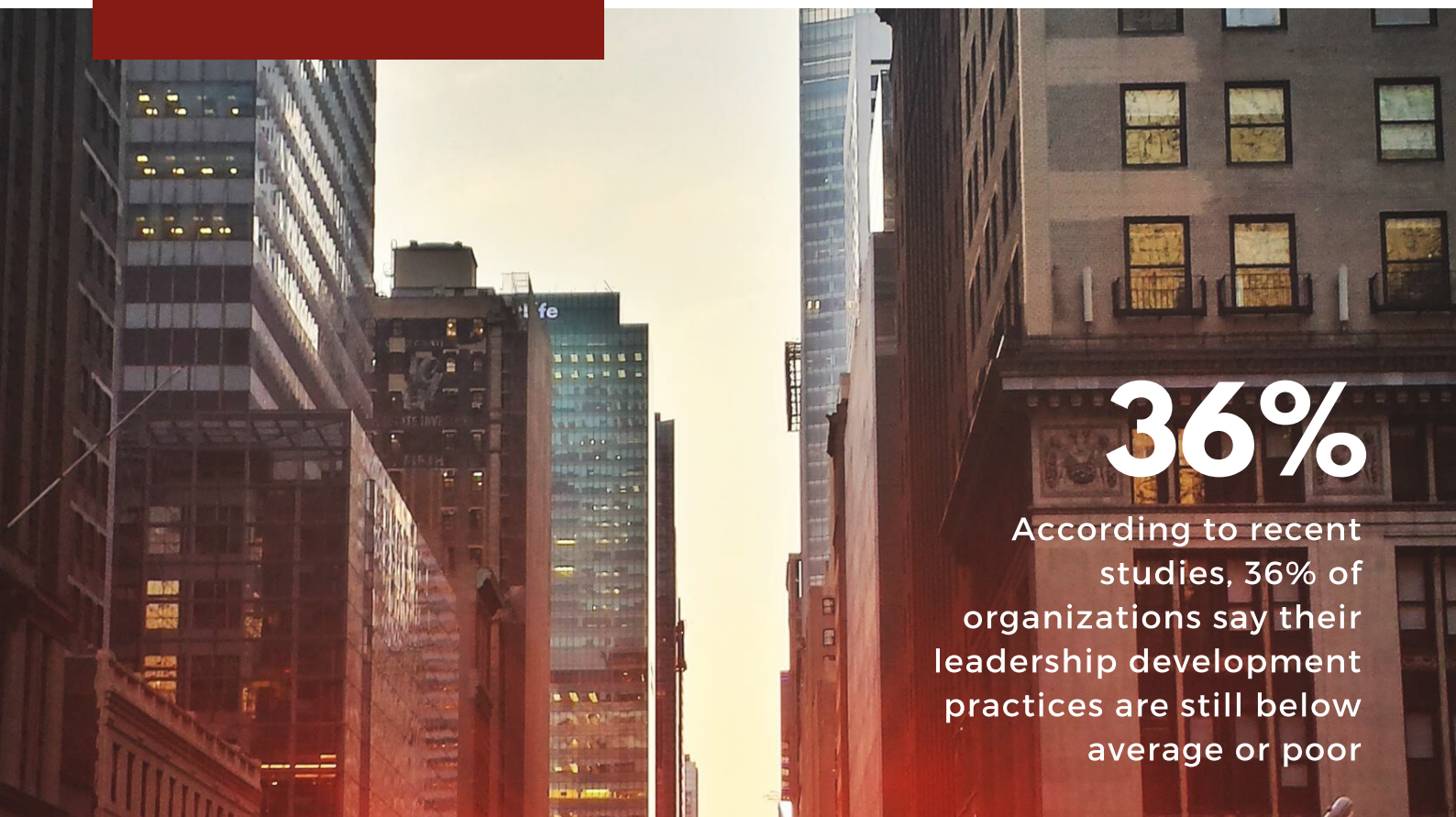


# HARD WORK

Look, nothing worth having comes easy right? Well, it's no different when it comes to leadership development. It's going to take HARD WORK to get you to the finish line.

HARD WORK is the acronym we use at Le8der to better define the skills and traits that each and every person must embody in order to be a true leader.

H - Have Integrity  
A - Ambitious Goals  
R - Read More  
D - Develop Good Habits  
W- Workout  
O - Optimism Is A Magnet  
R - Reframe Failure  
K - Know Your Why



# 36%

According to recent studies, 36% of organizations say their leadership development practices are still below average or poor

## Have Integrity

Leadership is not something you get to participate in when you feel like it. It is a set of daily choices that you make every single day for the rest of your life.

The first choice I need YOU to make is that no matter what you do, you will do it with integrity. As a Le8der, people all around you will be looking to you for guidance, advice, as well as someone to model their own behaviours after. Knowing this, you need to ensure that you are operating with integrity.

What does this mean? Well, having integrity means doing the right thing for the right reasons. No matter how difficult that might be, you don't give in to the temptation of taking the easy road or shortcuts that could end up being a problem for you down the road.

For example, many companies operating online will choose to buy their testimonials and reviews of their products. While this may lead to an initial surge in sales, inevitably if your product or service doesn't live up to what has been marketed, your consumers will lose trust in your company.

The same is true with your own staff. If you continually make poor choices or don't live up to the promises that you are making to your team, you are

essentially eroding the level of trust that you have with them and as a result, your ability to lead them going forward will erode just the same.

People appreciate it when you conduct yourself professionally, with honest and open intentions. Being a vulnerable Le8der does not show weakness. It shows that you are human and approachable.

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### INTEGRITY

**The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.**

#Le8derDNA

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Before you keep reading, take a moment and reflect on the decisions you have made in your past. Have you been living with an integrity first mindset? If you have, give yourself a pat on the back. If you haven't, don't worry. Today is the start of your new leadership journey!

Le8ders start each day with an integrity first mindset.

## *Ambitious Goals*

The second piece to building Le8der DNA is all about goals. But not just any goals. People who really drive change and celebrate huge success don't just set goals. They set ambitious goals. What's the difference? Let's explore that now.

Anybody is capable of setting a goal and achieving it. All you need to do is keep it simple. If I set a goal of saving \$10 this month, I could easily achieve that. Boom! I am now a success story, right? Wrong. Nobody is going to celebrate taking the easy road.

People look to Le8ders when they want inspiration. Or when they have really complex problems. So make sure that you are setting ambitious targets. The reason that I emphasize "ambitious" is that really cool things can happen when you push your own limits. You need to exit your comfort zone and challenge yourself to do more and achieve more than you originally thought possible. The process of achieving these goals is really where the magic happens. In fact, I would argue that success isn't defined by reaching your goal. Success is found at all the checkpoints along the way.

Setting ambitious goals that drive you towards your desired outcomes is what I want you focused on. Don't just set a bunch of goals. First, decide what the

outcome you want is. No matter how big or crazy the outcome may be. Then work backwards. What are the goals you will need to achieve in order to get to the finish line? Chew on that for a while and then get to work!

## *Read More*

That brings us to reading more. Now, before you turn your nose up at the thought of actually having to read more books, you could also substitute seminars, webinars, videos, TED talks, etc.

Really what I am getting at here is that Le8ders need to have an insatiable thirst for learning. Knowledge is something that nobody can ever take away from you. Being well rounded on a variety of subjects will help you interact with a wider audience and feel more comfortable in your own skin.

The biggest mistake most people make is that they spend a weekend reading the latest greatest self-development book and pat themselves on the back for doing so. Then come Monday morning, not one principle that they learned from the book (seminar, youtube video, etc) gets implemented into their life.

Do not build a mental bookshelf. Nobody cares what you know, they care about what you DO!



## *Develop Good Habits*

The human brain is an amazing tool that you need to take advantage of. When I talk about developing good habits, I don't mean brushing your teeth each day, I mean programming neural connections that allow you to navigate your day more easily.

Sounds complicated right? The good news, it's not! The amazing thing about our brain is that you can program it to essentially run scripts for you. Think about driving your vehicle each day. How often do you consciously think about putting on your seatbelt? For most of us, I would argue that you don't. You get in your car, and without even thinking about it, you put your seatbelt on. You have done this task so many times, that your brain has taken control for you.

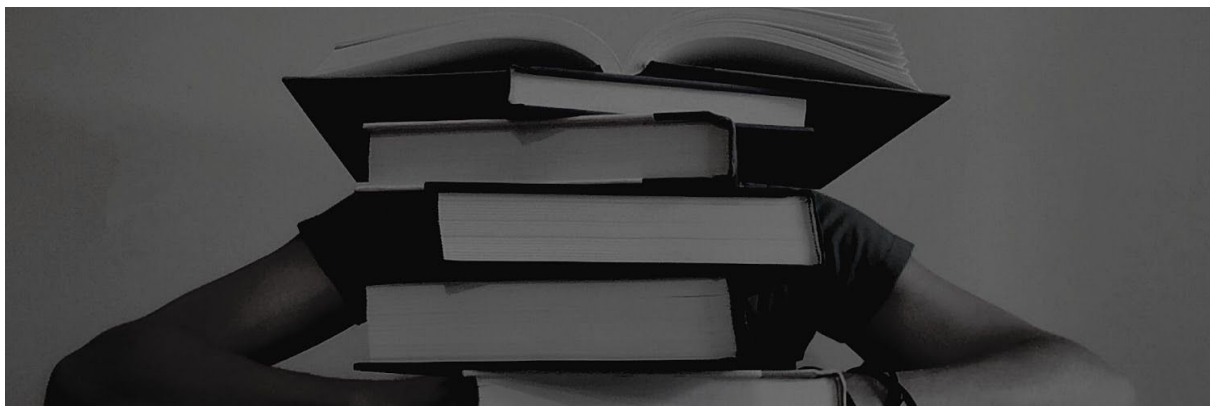
There is obviously a ton of science behind this and a lot of people who are way smarter than me that could explain what is really happening, but for our purposes, all we need to understand is

that our brain is a powerful productivity tool.



Making decisions takes energy. As a Le8der, you will undoubtedly be making decision after decision all day every day. So to ease some of that mental strain, start to develop habits that will help you. Structure your day to be the same (as much as possible) each day. For example, only check your email at a certain time or times each day. It will be difficult at first because you will be tempted to take a peak or else you will be worried that you are missing something important. But over time, your brain will learn that at 11 am, for example, you check email. So that at 8 am, you won't even think about it anymore.

There is a fantastic book (see the previous section Read More...) by Charles Duhigg called, "The Power Of Habit". I highly recommend it to every Le8der.



## **W**orkout

Being a Le8der isn't easy. It's long days followed by long nights sometimes. In order for you to perform at your best, you need to be in good physical and mental shape.

When some people hear the word "workout", they immediately think about crowded gyms or expensive personal trainers. And while that could be a true reality for you, it doesn't need to be.

I'm not telling you that in order for you to be a successful Le8der, you need to be hitting personal bests or running marathons. What I am telling you is that you need to take care of your body and your mind.

We just talked about developing good habits. Make working out a habit if it isn't for you already. A quick walk or run on a treadmill, or even tossing a ball around outside with your kids is all it takes to get your heart rate up and some blood flowing through you. We all need to escape work sometimes and working out is a fantastic way to help relieve some stress.

Find whatever works for you, and stick to it. Your future self will thank you for it!

## **O**ptimism Is A Magnet

Next on our list is all about optimism. How many of you have worked in an office or have been on a team where there was one person who just couldn't help but remind you of all the reasons why something wouldn't work, couldn't work, or shouldn't work?

Outlaw negativity! Very quickly have direct conversations with negative people around you. Inform them that you are not interested in, or appreciative of their negative behaviours. Negativity is a serial killer. It kills morale, productivity, and ultimately the success of your business.

Celebrate people on your team that choose optimism. Encourage them to find the good in things. Even the most complex problems provide you with positive experiences if you frame them that way. Optimism attracts more positivity. People will be less stressed, more productive and generally just happier at work.

Do a quick audit of yourself, and those around you. Find out where positivity lives and where negativity hides. Root out the negativity and close the door on it! As a Le8der, it is your responsibility to create the right environment for the people you lead.

## *Reframe Failure*

Failure has become a bit of a buzzword these days. There is no shortage of people telling you how important failure is to success. How “failing fast” is the road to take.

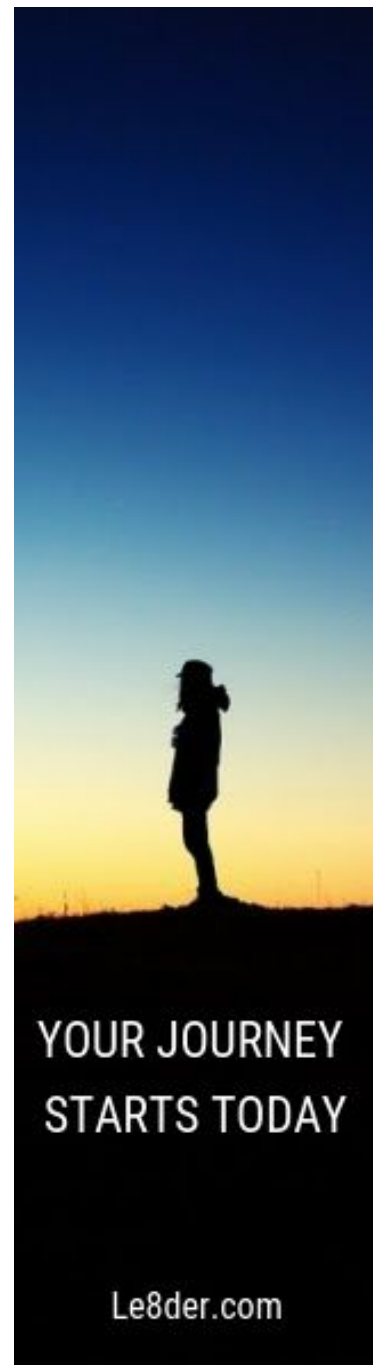
Well, they may have a point. Failure is what you make of it. Like most things in life, how you respond to something is 100% your choice. You can choose to dwell and be self-deprecating, or you can choose to learn, adjust, and try again. Le8ders choose the latter.

The truth is that you will fail. You will fail multiple times. You will fail while you are young and you will fail while you are old. Failure doesn't care who you are or what you have done. So the sooner you are ok with that, the better off you will be.

What you need to focus on is the response to your failure. Break it down and really understand what the root causes were and how you can adjust. If you have a continuous improvement mindset, you can frame failure into something good.

So the next time you fail at something, just remember to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get back to work! People are counting on you. They are watching to see how you respond, so

make sure you set a good example for them!





## *Know Your Why*

The final piece to the puzzle is perhaps the most important. For you to be an effective Le8der, you need to understand fundamentally why you even want to be.

Very often, people are put in management positions and told that they are now a leader. Don't fall for it. There are thousands of managers out there who don't know a thing about leadership. If all you are concerned about is the company, profits, or shareholder happiness, then good for you. Have a nice career.

If you actually care about the people you work with and want to help create an opportunity for career development, process improvement, customer satisfaction, or any number of other positive things, then you stand a very good chance of being an amazing Le8der.

Look the truth is not a secret. Being an effective Le8der takes HARD WORK. So make sure you are in it for the right reasons.

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Don't worry so much about being the best. Instead focus more of your efforts on being the most consistent. Consistency is really what matters most with anything that you do

MARK WILSON - @LE8DER

