

Followership

I believe that everyone needs to be a follower many times in life. Followers are essentially the drive behind most groups. It is the power of ALL that accomplishes much, but one person can change the direction of that power. Often followers have the clearest sight of all involved. —Laura A. Bennett



Followership: Defined

- “***Followership*** is the capacity or willingness to follow a leader.”
- Why is it important to balance leadership and followership during your CEE? How will you go about doing this?

Reasons to Follow a Leader

1. Fear of Retribution

- “If I do not follow, I may lose my job!”
- A coercive type of power; neither effective nor ethical

2. Blind Hope

- “We must do something, and I hope this works!”
- Desperate for a solution due to a lack of alternatives

3. Faith in Leader

- “What a great person. If anyone knows the answer, they do!”
- Blind to the solution and overly faithful in the leader

4. Intellectual Agreement

- “What a good idea! That certainly makes sense.”
- Logic acts as a guide

5. Buying the Vision

- “What a brilliant, I don’t care who thought of it!”
- Emotionally identifying with a view of the future

Followership & Respect

When an individual decides to become a follower, they consider both the leader and the solution the leader is offering. The resulting style of followership can be illustrated through the grid below:

	Respect for the Solution		
Respect for the Leader	Strong	Weak	Neutral
Strong	Powerful Buy-in	Blind Faith	Wait and See
Weak	Blind Hope	Outright Opposition	
Neutral	Wait and See		

The Leader-Follower Loop

The leader-follower loop is an ongoing interplay in which each closely monitors the other and responds accordingly.

- Noticing: the leader notices that followers are not as inclined to follow or act as they once were.
- Diagnosing: he or she will move on to figure out why.
- Adjusting: the leader then adjusts his or her behavior appropriately.



Characteristics of Good Followership

Self Management:

- Think for yourself
- Complete tasks you have been assigned

Commitment

- Demonstrate commitment to your organization
 - Example:

Competence and Focus

- Be proactive
- Be focused

Courage

- Offer independent and critical thinking
- Fight for what you believe in

The Importance of Collaboration

- Followers are just as fundamental to the leadership equation as leaders—they just serve a different purpose.
- True leadership stands strong by focusing on effective relationships rather than the superior skills or traits of the leader alone.
- At the end of the day, it is necessary for both leaders and followers to be close allies and work together to get things done.

How can *you* be a good follower?

- Take a moment and bring to mind a group or organization in which you are currently a follower. What is the reason you are a follower within this group?
- Continue to think of the same group. What do you think is the “reason to follow” for the majority of followers?
- (Assume that you didn’t choose one of the last two reasons—Intellectual Agreement or Buying the Vision.) If you were the leader of this group, what would you do to get followers to “Buy the Vision?”

How can you be a good follower?

- Reviewing the *Essential Qualities of Good Followers* section, what are the top two qualities you feel you exhibit most often? With each quality, provide an example of how you have exhibited this quality in the last six months.
- Are there qualities you can improve on? Choose the quality you feel needs the most improvement, and think of specifics on how you will improve upon it.