

Are You Walking Your Talk?

By Allan Forbis, Director
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Type the word “**leadership**” into your internet search engine box, and an instant, endless amount of articles, quotes and socially-shareable blurbs will appear from hundreds of proven and so-called industry experts alike. In fact, so much is written about the *concept* of leadership, it appears to have become its own social media bandwagon.

Everybody’s talking about #Leadership!

So, while all of this discussion over the *concept of leadership* is taking place; the real topic in question becomes whether, as experts or merely theory enthusiasts, we are actually putting Leadership into our daily practice?

When we act, we do something both mentally and physically, and do so with intention. Leading by example means that we make the conscious effort to model the type of behavior that we are attempting to elicit from others. In short, we must live leadership – we can’t just give it lip service.

The first step to being a true leader is actually taking that first step.

Whatever you do, if you are a manager or director, take a moment to evaluate what you are saying and compare your words with how you represent yourself to your employees. Growing up, I remember my father sometimes using the old phrase, “Do as I say, not as I do.” When I was younger, I wasn’t always sure what that meant. Now, having observed that phrase play out in many ways over the years, and certainly as it pertains to leadership, I know the importance of being true to yourself and those you lead. You simply can’t expect followers to do what you say when you’re not out in front doing it yourself.

At The Center for Management and Professional Development, several of our [Leadership and Development programs](#) are based on Stephen R Covey’s “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” series. Covey instructs us to “begin with the end in mind,” which means we must visualize what we want the outcome to be before we begin to take action.

Say this to yourself, “[Leaders are learners](#), and I am a leader.” This short phrase will serve as a reminder that you, like any other true leader you may admire, had to learn how to become the leader he or she turned out to be. You can’t just give it lip service. You don’t have to be a “born leader” to be good at being a leader, but you do have to be willing to think, practice, fail, review, succeed and just do.

Be brave enough to walk the talk.

Author Neals Donald Walsh is quoted with saying, “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” For some, the responsibility of being a leader means being courageous enough to step outside our comfort zone too. It takes exploration, bravery and continuous learning to act, behave and perform as a leader.

Don’t just talk about leadership. Be willing to step outside your comfort zone, and make it a habit to live a life of leadership.



Allan Forbis is the Director of the [State of Missouri’s Center for Management and Professional Development](#) within the Office of Administration’s Division of Personnel. Through the Center, his team of training consultants provide a variety of training solutions that help public and private employers see first-hand what happens when they work together to provide direction, awareness and focus for employees. They succeed by providing strategies for managing the performance of the people that make success a reality.

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