

FRINGE BENEFITS

There are plenty of reasons to love being a leader. Here are 10 of them.

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Most people work diligently throughout their careers to secure leadership positions. They are well aware of the benefits to their career, status and income—to name a few. Yet the rewards are often overlooked or questioned because of the constant preoccupation with day-to-day challenges.

But leadership can be a highly liberating and exhilarating state. Here are 10 things that being a leader lets you do:

- 1. Define your destiny.** I believe that things happen for a reason. You allow things to happen or you make things happen. No one has full control over their destiny, but you have far more control than most people choose to believe. As a leader, you sit in the driver's seat and have a unique vantage point from which to create your future.
- 2. Accelerate learning and growing.** The more you do and the more responsibilities you take on, the greater your opportunities to learn. Learning is key to opening doors and creating opportunities. Moreover, learning can add a special gusto to life that drives your desire to learn even more.
- 3. Help others to reach their potential.** A team's achievements are not so much a factor of the knowledge and experience of its leader, but more so the tapping into the inherent potential that lies within each member of the team. Helping others to stretch and discover their potential can be not only highly gratifying and rewarding, it also encourages loyalty, dedication and discipline.
- 4. Make an impact on a larger scale.** We all want to contribute more, have a positive impact and make a difference. Although leading a team of one can yield noteworthy results, leading a team of many can have a multiplying effect on the scope and impact of the accomplishment. Lofty accomplishments that might otherwise be impossible are now within reach.
- 5. Fine-tune skills that last a lifetime.** Being a leader is a great way to build your résumé. Leadership skills are always in demand. And the more you lead, the more opportunity you have to hone your craft. You'll make mistakes along the way, but working at improving your skills will continue to enhance your effectiveness, contributions and reputation.
- 6. Increase your financial well-being.** Although perhaps not the most important reason to love being a leader, it's always nice to have a bit more pocket change. The more successful you are as a leader, the more in demand you are, which, in turn, raises your stock price. There is a direct relationship between your leadership effectiveness and your compensation.
- 7. Create a highly effective team.** Almost anything is possible to achieve when you are leading a great team. And it's gratifying to play a pivotal part in inspiring a team to achieve its objectives.
- 8. Walk the talk.** It's easy to sit on the sidelines and whine. But the most effective leaders don't point fingers or snipe at others. True leaders are too busy solving problems. As a leader, you're in the middle of the game. You get to practice what you preach. You don't just talk about it. You get to do it.
- 9. Turn a vision into reality.** Everything begins with a thought and a vision. You feel the best when you are part of that vision becoming a reality—however simple or lofty it may be. It's a great feeling to turn your dreams into reality no matter who the client or benefactor might be. As a leader, you have the position and opportunity to do so.
- 10. Partake in the adventure of life.** This is your life. Savor and enjoy. Have some fun with it. Living your dream is a whole lot more exciting than just dreaming your life. A leader has a front-row seat in pursuing the adventure of life.

That's only a starter list, of course. Consider beginning each day thinking about the reasons to be grateful for your position and the great impact that you can have within your chosen domain of responsibility. Those positive thoughts may help your day become the success you desire. Now, go make a bigger difference—and enjoy your journey! PM

Neal Whitten, PMP, president of The Neal Whitten Group, is a speaker, trainer, consultant, mentor and author. His latest book is Neal Whitten's Let's Talk! More No-Nonsense Advice for Project Success—Over 700 Q&As.

