­­ **Principles of Leadership**

**By Rufus Parker**

* Key principles discussed:
  + Know yourself and seek self-improvement
  + Be technically proficient
  + Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions
  + Make sound and timely decisions
  + Set the example
  + Know your people and look out for their well-being
  + Keep your people informed
  + Develop a sense of responsibility in your people
  + Build the team
  + Don't take on more than you can handle
* Set of guidelines, access leadership abilities, develop plans for personal improvement and for those under you.
* When we think of principles, we think of basics. Let’s take a look at each:
* Know yourself and seek self-improvement
  + Know who you are and what your strengths and weaknesses are.
  + Allows you to take advantage of your strengths and work to improve your weaknesses.
  + Continually develop your strengths and to work on any weaknesses you have.
  + Will increase your competency and the confidence your people have in your ability to get things done.
* Be technically proficient
  + As a leader, you must study to know your job.
  + Understand how to plan, budget, requisition, and use available systems of technology.
  + This is enhanced when you know yourself and your limitations.
* Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions
  + Leading always involves responsibility.
  + If you choose to become a leader, then you must seek out responsibility and take responsibility for any decisions that you make.
  + Don't point the finger at others for failures. As President Truman said, "The buck stops here."
* Make sound and timely decisions
  + As a leader, you must be able to assess situations and make timely decisions.
  + Delayed decisions can have a major impact on the organization or someone's life.
* Set the example
  + As stated earlier, you must be a role model.
  + It's one thing to tell people what to do; it's another thing to show them how to do it. A picture is worth a thousand words.
* Know your people and look out for their wellbeing
  + It is not just enough to know their names; you should know some things about their livelihood, family situations, their likes and dislikes.
  + They must see that you care about them and their loved ones.
  + They must see that you are willing to stand with them in the bad times as well as the good times.
* Keep your people informed
  + Helps them to make decisions, execute plans within your intent, and take initiative
  + Also helps to improve teamwork and to enhance morale.
* Develop a sense of responsibility in your people
  + Leaders who will not delegate authority to their people will never see people who feel they are a part of the organization.
  + Leaders must give people things to do and then let them do it their own way.
  + General George S. Patton said, "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what needs to be done, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”
* Build the team
  + As a leader you must develop a team spirit within your people.
  + As the apostle Paul stated, "Now are they many members, yet but one body."
  + You only become a team when your people trust and respect you and when they see the importance of their contribution to the overall organization.
* Don't take on more than you can handle
  + Some leaders do not know how to say no.
  + They feel that their boss will see them as failures if they say that they are unable to take on another task or assume more responsibility
  + Even Jesus asked this question: see Luke 14:31.
  + In other words, you need to consider the cost. Trying to do more with less will only create frustration and will cause your people to quit.
* The principles of leadership will help you to accomplish your mission and to care for your people.
  + They are the foundation for leadership.
  + Like the traits of character, there is no formula that shows which principle is more important or how you should apply them.
  + As a leader you must develop a balance of these principles in yourself and in your people.