

Leadership

GSI Caller School



LEAD...FOLLOW...OR GET OUT OF THE WAY

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Leadership is action, not position. It is the ability to influence the behavior of others toward some desired outcome.

A caller leads (whether one wants to or not) in a variety of ways:

- The caller is usually alone on stage and the only one with the mike
- Professional knowledge and technical competence
- Influencing the dancers - both directly and indirectly
- Personal example (clothing, dance styling, general demeanor, etc.)
- Innovation, originality and creativity
- Sensitivity to the needs of others

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BECOMING A LEADER

A person making the decision to become a caller must be aware of the leadership responsibilities that the position or title entails. Whether or not the caller wants or is prepared for the leadership role, it automatically becomes a part of the job of being a caller.

The choice is not whether to be a leader, but what kind of leader to be.

QUALIFICATIONS

One of the key attributes of a successful leader is an attitude which indicates a real interest in others rather than self, accessibility and a willingness to hear others, and a motivational climate



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QUALIFICATIONS

Leaders provide direction, assistance, awareness, solace and comfort, and solutions.

Leaders are viewed by themselves and others as

Boss Friend Mother Hen Know-it-all Partner Facilitator

The truth is that most leaders are all of these to a degree, depending upon the time and circumstances.

Good leaders have the knack of knowing when to be what.

A person whose leadership qualities are respected will likely be pleased and responsive to recognition of their ability and a request for guidance.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

1. TO ONESELF

Calling, and the pressures of leadership which accompany it, can be stressful. Caller/leaders need to ask themselves, and answer as truthfully as possible, a number of questions. Among them:

- Knowing that the leadership role is inevitable.
- Am I prepared for the task ahead?
- Do I have the time and the tools?
- Can I take the pressure?
- Do I have my own act together?
- Do I set the proper example?
- Can I communicate (not just talk but do I know how to listen?)

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RESPONSIBILITIES

2. TO PARTNER / FAMILY

Frequently the leadership role is a shared one, with a partner assuming much of the responsibility for establishing a warm and caring atmosphere.

3. TO PEERS

- Do I have and practice a strong code of ethical behavior?
- Am I inclined to cooperate or to compete?
- Can I accept criticism?
- Can I give criticism constructively and without generalizing?

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RESPONSIBILITIES

4. TO DANCERS

The caller / leader must remember that the reason for being is to give dancers pleasurable dancing and promote the square dance activity.

5. TO THE SQUARE DANCE ACTIVITY

New leaders need to tread lightly, learn from predecessors, and make changes carefully. Perhaps the old saw, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" applies in most cases. Yet new leaders must have the courage of their convictions. A good measuring stick for leader self-evaluation is the question: Is what I am about to do, good for square dancing?



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Leadership is not without its **RISKS**. It is much easier to sit back and criticize than to take a leadership role, and leaders are targets of many barbs. It is impossible to please everyone all the time. A sense of dedication, a sense of humor and sometimes a thick skin are a necessary part of the successful leader's qualities.

Nor is the leadership role without its **REWARDS**. Frustrated though it may be at times, that role can bring great satisfaction when goals are reached, a job is well done, or appreciation is shown by everything from applause to that gift from the group on a special occasion.

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SUMMARY

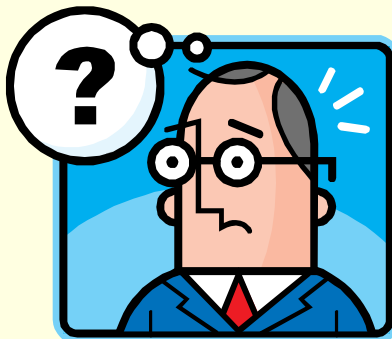
The development of effective square dance leaders is vital to the health and growth of our square dance activity and is the responsibility of those who teach dancers and/or train callers. Being an effective leader is not easy. It takes work and dedication. Callers inevitably find themselves in leadership roles. They need to accept these roles with humility and the resolve to do the best job possible for the good of square dancing.

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QUESTIONS



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ANSWERS