

A Leader's Evaluation of Followership

In any journey, determining a helpful route requires having a sense of where we're starting from, as well as ensuring that we continue on the right pathway. Getting others' perspective is one valuable way of determining the quality of our journey, and our leader should be one of the insightful and empowering voices in that process.

The following questions are based on many of the principles of excellent followership found in [Embracing Followership: How to Thrive in a Leader-Centric Culture](#) (Kirkdale Press, 2016).

Misconceptions: Chapters 2 & 4 detail eight misconceptions that followers commonly wrestle with in thinking about themselves and their leaders. Which of the following seem to be part of your follower's current self-image or perspective? How are these misconceptions impacting their interactions with their peers and superiors? How are you helping your follower to navigate these misconceptions, and how are they responding to your support?

1. Leadership is the goal of followership.
2. I'm a follower because I'm a coward.
3. Followers have no authority or influence.
4. Followership lacks honor and dignity.
5. Leaders are superior versions of followers.
6. Leaders must be perfect.
7. Hierarchy is inherently inhibiting.
8. Followers don't *really* need leaders.

Each study in the supplemental [Discussion Guide for Teams & Small Groups](#) focuses on a misconception. Be sure to investigate the realities that correct each of these misconceptions (also found in Chapters 2 & 4).

Obligations: Chapter 5 explores five obligations for engaging in true followership. What are your expectations for your follower in each of these? To what extent is he/she fulfilling each obligation?

1. Participate...contribute *something* & engage
2. Steward your resources & opportunities...intentionally use what you have
3. Honor your leaders...value and respect leaders as collaborators
4. Submit to your leaders...receive the influence and decisions of others
5. Be...right in your attitude and growing in your development

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Contributions: Chapter 6 presents four additional opportunities for contribution as excellent followers. Which of these are most evident in your follower? To what extent are your follower's contributions appropriate, respectful, and effective? Which elements might your organization or endeavor be especially in need of?

1. Giving credence to an endeavor
2. Providing a network of support
3. Guiding from behind
4. Developing your leader

Challenges: In addition to any misconceptions, Chapters 8-10 present nine challenges often encountered in trying to fulfill opportunities for followership. Which of these challenges seem to be most prevalent in your follower, significantly impacting their ability to follow with excellence? What recommendations do you have for how he/she might overcome these?

Internal Challenges: Desire for Originality, Need for Acknowledgement, Avoidance of Risk

Relational Challenges: Communication, Personality Differences, Expectations

Cultural Challenges: Organizational Structure, Labels & Terminology, Cross-Cultural Differences

Commitments: My study of leader-follower pairs has revealed that there are two significant commitments that characterize most excellent followers. They have a commitment (1) to people/relationships, and (2) to purpose/the work. How would you describe your follower's level of commitment in each area? What, if anything, is holding them back from experiencing a fuller sense of ownership (see Chapter 7) in regards to the relationships (both with peers and superiors) and the projects, endeavors, goals, and aims that your group/organization/workplace is focused on?

1. Commitment to People
2. Commitment to Purpose

This evaluation should be used in conjunction with the [Followership Self-Evaluation](#) to provide a fuller picture of the followership quality and needs for growth. As a leader, you will also benefit from the [Leadership Self-Evaluation](#) as an additional platform for considering how best you can facilitate your follower's improvement. These are both available—along with other worksheets, activities, and resources—for [free download](#).