



The First Tenet of Leadership: Know Yourself

As a leader, you are always being watched by someone: Your subordinates, your peers, your leaders and others in your organization. It's as if you are in a glass house, and everyone can see everything you do. Yet, others cannot know everything you think. Your actions may be a signal to how you think; however, how and what we think are hidden from others. It follows then that who we really are is also hidden.

Others see your behaviors, your habits, what appear to them to be your strengths and your weaknesses. They see how you react under stress, how you deal with great successes and how you cope with difficult situations. Yet they can't see the real you...they can't see your values, your desires, your needs. And sometimes even **you** don't know the real you.

The first technique to becoming an effective leader is to know yourself. In a November-December, 1998 *Harvard Business Review* article, "What Makes a Leader?" Daniel Goleman states, "Effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of emotional intelligence." In the article, Goleman defines emotional intelligence as containing five components: Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill. Self-awareness, or knowing yourself, comes first.

How do you learn more about yourself? There are a number of assessments available to you: DiSC, Myers-Briggs, StrengthsFinder, Center for Creative Leadership assessments, The Hay Group assessments, and the Birkman®, to name a few. All of these in some form allow you to assess yourself and your behaviors to provide some insight into the real you. Another way to understand more about yourself is to work with an executive coach, who will help you uncover the real you through the use of effective questions.

When you know yourself, you are in a position to anticipate your behaviors and actions to various situations. You can then create strategies that allow you to overcome or manage behaviors that get in the way of being an effective leader.