

Are You a Worker or a Leader?

Workers let other people make their decisions. Leaders make the choices themselves. To understand this concept, go to the **Going Beyond** folder for Chapter 25 at EffectiveTeaching.com.

There are two kinds of people: **WORKERS** and **LEADERS**. They each have their distinctive characteristics and these characteristics will lead to certain results in life.

There are two kinds of teachers: those who go into teaching because it is a job, and those **who are committed to making a difference in the lives of people**.

You can predict your life as a teacher 10, 20, even 30 years from now on the basis of these characteristics.

The Teacher as a Worker

The two things that matter the most to a worker are time and money. Workers are preoccupied with time for breaks, holidays, overtime, and work hours. They will do everything to negotiate for longer breaks and shorter work hours. There are teachers and teacher organizations that will negotiate away in-service meetings, negotiate the number of minutes allotted to such meetings, or negotiate to have such meetings on a Friday before a three-day weekend—anything to minimize learning. Their salaries are determined by how much time and how many years they put into teaching. Time and money, not learning or growing, are the primary concerns of a worker.

A worker will agree to put in more hours or agree to in-service participation if it entails additional pay or some form of perk. **Money and other tangible rewards are what workers understand.**

Workers have no future. Workers who do not increase their skills run the risk of being the first to be laid off or fired because they have failed to stay abreast of changing job skills in a technological society. Workers have no future; they live for the moment. Similarly, there is no future for a teacher who teaches just one way, because that “one way” may be suspect.

In reality, the worker-teacher has already been fired from within the system. These are the teachers who retired in their own classrooms and have fired themselves from life. These are the teachers to whom early retirement is offered or who are transferred from school to school or job to job so that they will do the least amount of damage or at least spread the damage evenly and as thinly as possible throughout the district. These are the teachers the parents have fired because they complain long and hard to have their children placed with another teacher elsewhere.

Teaching is used by many teachers as a way to earn money to pay the bills and support the family. Their commitment to teaching stops at the dismissal bell, with no time and little desire to partake of growth and learning opportunities. Compensation is what they want from life.

If effectiveness is correlated with compensation, they will fight every effort to measure their effectiveness and be content to just plod along from year to year watching their salaries grow very slowly over time. They equate time with money, not effectiveness with money.

They make no effort to improve their effectiveness. They cannot even define teacher effectiveness. They are not concerned with producing results, even in their own lives. So, if they cannot help themselves, they cannot help others.

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The Teacher as a Leader

The two major concerns of a leader are enhancement and cooperation. Like workers, leaders have a job and put in time to earn money. But leaders are willing to put in additional time to improve themselves, the people they work with, and the environment in which they work. As a result, leaders also make more money. They make more money not because they put in more time on the job but because they put in more time to improve their skills and enhance their life. **Life rewards the competent, not the clock watchers.**

It's your life. You are responsible for your own results.

Educational Leaders Work Collaboratively

Leaders have the ability to work collaboratively. They easily work with other people and can lead or get other people to work collaboratively and productively. **Anyone who can work collaboratively and productively is always rewarded to a greater extent.**

Leaders have careers. People who are constantly enhancing their work lives have careers rather than jobs.

A job is something a person does to earn a living; a career is something a person does to enhance one's own life. A person who has a career can do a variety of jobs because through constant learning and growing, the person acquires many talents and skills.

Our body of knowledge is doubling at exponential rates. The point is very obvious: successful people continue to learn. You can be an expert in education in less than a year.

Anyone who has talents and skills is valuable as a thinker, a problem solver, and a decision maker. These people, of course, are more valuable to a community, school, or organization, and are rewarded for their contributions.

Leaders are professionals. A person who has a career, who has many talents and skills, who is a thinker, a problem solver, and a decision maker, is a professional. The professional teacher recognizes that the classroom is a complex environment; the most successful teacher is the one who is capable of making decisions and solving problems in that environment.

Leaders have a career and have a future. People with careers can do many jobs and, should they lose a job, can move to another job because they are qualified to do several things. Therefore, leaders are not concerned with time and money; they have their mind set on growing and working collaboratively with others.

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A Comparison	
Workers	Leaders
A WORKER is concerned with time and money .	A LEADER is concerned with enhancement and cooperation .
A WORKER has a job .	A LEADER has a career .
A WORKER is hired to do a job .	A LEADER is hired to think, make decisions, and solve problems .
A WORKER is an hourly laborer with a skill.	A LEADER is a professional with talent.
A WORKER can be fired from a job.	A LEADER cannot be fired from a career.
A WORKER cannot find another job because of training in only one job.	A LEADER can always find another job because he or she possesses versatile skills.
A WORKER has no future in having a job.	A LEADER has a great future because he or she is oriented toward a career.

Leaders Are in Control

Leaders control their own lives and are achievement oriented. They produce results—the definition of effectiveness—in others and in themselves.

*Happiness is produced not so much by great pieces
of good fortune that seldom happen
as by little advantages that occur every day.*

-Benjamin Franklin

Leaders seek their own means to reach their goals. They do not live for the moment; they live for their goals.

- Life is a series of opportunities.
- Most opportunities come only once in a lifetime.
- An opportunity is a moving target, and the bigger the target, the faster it moves.
- Opportunities always come in when the doors are left open for them.

Are You a Worker or a Leader?

- Research shows that if you do not use an idea or an opportunity within three days, you will never use it.
- And if you use it within 24 hours, you are more likely to integrate it permanently.

Be a leader today and every day.