

Where Have All the Leaders Gone? by [Lee Iacocca](#)

10 C's of Leadership

A leader has to show **CURIOSITY**. He has to listen to people outside of the "Yes, sir" crowd in his inner circle. He has to read voraciously, because the world is a big, complicated place.

A leader has to be **CREATIVE**, go out on a limb, be willing to try something different. You know, *think outside the box*.

A leader has to **COMMUNICATE**. I'm not talking about running off at the mouth or spouting sound bites. I'm talking about facing reality and telling the truth.

A leader has to be a person of **CHARACTER**. That means knowing the difference between right and wrong and having the guts to do the right thing. Abraham Lincoln once said, "If you want to test a man's character, give him power."

A leader must have **COURAGE**. Swagger isn't courage. Tough talk isn't courage. Courage is a commitment to sit down at the negotiating table and *talk*.

If you're a politician, courage means taking a position even when you know it will cost you votes.

To be a leader you've got to have **CONVICTION** — a fire in your belly. You've got to have passion. You've got to really want to get something done. How do you measure fire in the belly?

A leader should have **CHARISMA**. I'm not talking about being flashy. Charisma is the quality that makes people want to follow you. It's the ability to *inspire*. People follow a leader because they *trust* him. That's my definition of charisma.

A leader has to be **COMPETENT**. That seems obvious, doesn't it? You've got to know what you're doing. More important than that, you've got to surround yourself with people who know what *they're* doing.

You can't be a leader if you don't have **COMMON SENSE**. I call this Charlie Beacham's rule. When I was a young guy just starting out in the car business, one of my first jobs was as Ford's zone manager in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. My boss was a guy named Charlie Beacham, who was the East Coast regional manager. Charlie was a big Southerner, with a warm drawl, a huge smile, and a core of steel. Charlie used to tell me, "Remember, Lee, the only thing you've got going for you as a human being is your ability to reason and your common sense. If you don't know a dip of horse crap from a dip of vanilla ice cream, you'll never make it."

THE BIGGEST C IS CRISIS

Leaders are made, not born. Leadership is forged in times of crisis. It's easy to sit there with your feet up on the desk and talk theory. Or send someone else's kids off to war when you've never seen a battlefield yourself. It's another thing to lead when your world comes tumbling down.