

Have you ever been in a situation where someone took control by conveying a clear vision of the teams goals, a marked passion for the work and an ability to make the rest of the team feel recharged and energized? This person just might be what is called a transformational leader.

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well.

A transformational leader puts passion and energy into everything. They care about YOU and want YOU to succeed.

Wikipedia defines Transformational leadership as 'a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organisation; being a role model for followers that inspires them; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that optimise their performance'.

Transformational leadership – starts with the development of a vision, a picture of the future that will excite and motivate others within the team. The next step is to constantly sell the vision. This takes commitment and energy. Some will come on board immediately while others will begin the journey much more slowly. The transformational leader will continue to advocate and convince others to climb on board for the journey. Transformational leaders need to create a culture of trust as their personal integrity is a critical part of bringing others on the journey.

Transformational leaders seek a way forward. Some will know the way, others do not have a ready strategy, but will lead the exploration of possible routes forward. The route forward may not always be obvious, but with clear vision the direction will always be known.

Transformational leaders are always visible. They role model a positive attitude and strength of conviction and commitment to the vision. They listen to others, enthuse and motivate others. They lead by example.

Bernard M. Bass (1985) also suggested that there are four different components to transformation leadership:

Intellectual Stimulation – Transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage creativity among followers. The leader encourages followers to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn.

Individualised Consideration – Transformational leadership also involves offering support and encouragement to individual followers. In order to foster supportive relationships, transformational leaders keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas and so that leaders can offer direct recognition of each followers unique contributions.

Inspirational Motivation – Transformational leaders have a clear vision that they are able to articulate to followers. These leaders are also able to help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfill these goals.

Idealised Influence – The transformational leaders serve as role models for followers. Because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate the leader and internalise his or her ideals.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformational_leadership
psychology.about.com/od/leadership/a/transformational.htm

