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I cover creativity, innovation, venture capital and disruptive change.



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If You Want To Be A Leader, Start Acting Like One

People are constantly asking me for advice on how to get promoted. They want to move up the ranks at their company, take on more [leadership](#) work, and be held responsible for more moving parts. While the notion of being a leader seems nice (but far off), you've got it backward. It's not suddenly that you're anointed as a leader and with that, you're bestowed responsibility – quite the opposite, actually. If you want to become a leader, start acting like one. [🐦](#)

Leadership isn't about your title, nor is it about bossing others around. Being a strong leader means thinking about the teams' needs before your own, helping other people to grow and maximize their own full potential, and sharing credit when it's due (and shouldering blame as needed, too). Why do you need to wait to get a promotion to start doing any of this? You don't – that's the good news, so start today. The more qualities of a leader that you begin to exhibit, the more obvious a choice you'll be for the actual promotion down the road. By positioning yourself as someone who's ready to take on more (after having proven yourself over a longer period of time), you'll be hard to ignore. Plus, over time, you'll have benefited your overall team with your efforts – this makes it a personal and collective win.

Let's say you're a salesperson striving to one day be a sales manager. While it'd be inappropriate to ask your peer-level colleagues for their numbers or hold them accountable to a certain quota, it doesn't mean you shouldn't start doing other things that a leader would typically start. For example, if a teammate struggled with his last demo, ask if he wants to shadow your next couple of them and have a discussion over lunch about what went well on those calls and what didn't, so you can help him improve his game.

If it's the end of the month and you know the crew will be there working late each day, be the one to show up with snacks and some music – by boosting morale and encouraging others to give all they have, you've helped the greater good. If you lose a big client and your current manager asks the group what went wrong, be the first person to vocalize how you personally could have done better – without casting any fault toward anyone else. Vice versa, if something is a big win, be the first to talk about what an awesome job that someone else did on a particular project – by giving praise to a teammate, or shouldering a difficult burden, you're positioning yourself as a true team player.

If you start acting like one, you're already a leader, with or without title.

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To me, creativity and innovation are the lifeblood of all human progress. As such, I've spent my career harnessing the spirit of creative disruption. My journey has been non-traditional at every step: I've been a professional jazz guitarist, 4-time tech entrepreneur, hyper-growth CEO, New York Times bestselling author, keynote speaker, venture capitalist, and urban reinventor. Today I lead Detroit Venture Partners, helping to rebuild my hometown of Detroit, Michigan by backing passionate entrepreneurs who can make a difference in our challenged city. It is a thrill to have a front-row seat to the greatest urban turnaround story in American history. I also am a frequent keynote speaker on innovation, creativity, and reinvention. I've written two books - *Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity* and *The Road to Reinvention: How to Drive Disruption and Accelerate Transformation*. My mission in life is to help the world be more creative. And yes, I still play a mean jazz guitar. More on me at [JoshLinkner.com](#).

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