

Is Leadership an Innate or Acquired Personality Trait?

What does it mean to be a good leader? What qualities does it take to become one? Can any of these traits be learned or mastered? Talking about leadership, it is indispensable to understand its complex nature. The attitude towards the concept differs greatly, and it has always been this way. While some people are convinced that leadership is an inborn quality, others believe it can be developed and advanced over time. However, before you start analyzing the peculiarities of leadership and its ins and outs, it is necessary to deal with the definition.

According to the Urban Dictionary, leadership is the quality that a person holds in which they command respect and are highly influential. However, in most cases, true leadership is about a combination of traits and characteristics, such as an ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage. Besides, certain qualities, behavioral patterns, and skills are indispensable for achievement of the desired position in a certain environment. Such options help leaders to inspire others, encourage them to make decisions, face challenges, and solve problems.

At the same time, to be a good leader is not only about giving commands but also about making people trust you, share your vision, and relish communication. Flexibility and the ability to adapt rapidly and effectively to a changing situation are the extra features a good leader should possess. An important point here is that a true leader values his people and never ignores their needs and preferences. Instead, they are adjusted in accordance with the vision of the team and the goals it is trying to achieve. The only question that arises is whether these traits are an inborn talent or they can be successfully developed.

Innate vs. Acquired Personality Traits

Is leadership an innate or acquired personality trait? To find out the right answer to the question, it is indispensable to start with a comparison of the two notions.

- Innate characteristics are sometimes called inborn, which means they are a part of the genetic constitution. Such traits do not need to be developed, as the persona has it from the very childhood. Most of the time, they remain stable and unchanged. Intelligence, temperament, and similar aspects can be great examples of innate traits.
- Acquired are the peculiarities that need to be developed. Personal experience, education, development, and a lot of effort are indispensable for success with the acquired personality traits. Additionally, it is significant to mind numerous factors that can influence the process, such as background, family, culture, social connections, and many others. Communication, problem-solving, analytical skills, empathy, and a range of other traits can be decent examples of acquired characteristics. Contrary to innate, these ones are more flexible and can be easily changed with time and experience.

So, is leadership an innate or acquired trait? It is still challenging to make a simple statement that would be a correct answer to the question.

Innate Leadership Qualities

People who support the idea of leadership being an innate characteristic are convinced that determination, self-confidence, charisma, and other inborn traits can be observed from a very early age. For example, if you watch a group of children in a kindergarten, you will notice a leader right away. It is a child that can lead others without any effort. When it comes to adults, it is worth mentioning charismatic politicians who have these bright personalities people are willing to follow and role model. Do all these people work hard to be this way? Absolutely not. Most of them make zero effort to become successful and prosperous in those areas. Innate vision, temperament, and character are the exact options that help them get supporters around.

Additionally, the psychological research suggests that leadership as an innate trait can be evolutionary selected. It means you are either born to be a leader or not. At this point, it is indispensable to mention that such an approach faces a lot of criticism, as it is impossible to become an influential and successful leader with innate qualities alone. Although having some of those characteristics is a great foundation for the advancement of the personality, it still requires much effort to advance and mold it.

Acquired Leadership Skills

Contrary to the above-mentioned idea, some people believe that leadership skills can be gained and developed through time, experience, and training. It is hard to deny the fact that you need to be an innate leader sometimes, but another critical thing is that some characteristics still require effort to be developed. As for such elements as conflict resolution, effective communication, decision-making, and others, they can definitely be practiced. It may take quite some time to attend leadership programs and work on the advancement of certain traits, but the struggle is real.

Emotional intelligence is another leadership skill that is believed to be acquired. Experience, training, and self-reflection, again, can help people to become leaders able to handle interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and motivate others.

The Link Between Innate and Acquired Traits in Leadership

While finding a universal answer to the question of whether leadership is an innate or acquired personality trait is hard or even impossible, certain conclusions can still be made. Leadership is a complex phenomenon that comprises a lot of aspects, starting with innate characteristics, experience, and knowledge. One of the aspects most people agree on is that even if you have inborn leadership skills, you will have to nurture, develop, and hone them through experience. Therefore, it is complicated to categorize leadership as a barely innate or acquired skill. Instead, it is a combination of both qualities that create a unique interplay.

Besides, the fact is that no matter if you have these traits or not, you will have to make an effort to develop them and be able to showcase.