

Unelected Leaders

You Can Lead Without Realizing It

If you're voted into office—a club, as team captain or, when you're old enough, government—it's pretty clear you're a leader. So, too are the expectations. But even if you're not elected, you're a leader in many ways. Sometimes without even realizing it!

► ROLE MODELS

Underclassmen and young siblings or cousins, for example, look up to you. They watch what you do and copy your behavior. Kids you baby sit for see you as a role model and a teacher, too.

If you've got a part-time job, new employees see you as someone with experience who can show them the ropes.

► ACTIVISTS

If you're passionate about a cause, such as the environment, citizenship or animal care, the advocacy work you do is leadership. So, too, is committee work and even membership in groups where you take an active role.

You may not see yourself as a leader, thinking you don't have what it takes. Maybe you don't like public speaking, but participating in a rally shows leadership.

Maybe you don't want to be a member of a service, but if you read the decoration committee, that's leadership.

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► GROW INTO IT

Most leaders step into their roles slowly, gaining experience as they go. You're likely already doing in that many areas. Give yourself credit, and your self-confidence as a leader will grow, too!

Some Unelected Leaders

Votes didn't get these people their positions, but they sure are recognized as leaders:

- BILL AND MELINDA GATES
- CORETTA SCOTT KING
- BABE RUTH
- OPRAH WINFREY

"A COMMUNITY IS LIKE A SHIP; EVERYONE OUGHT TO BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE HELM."—Henrik Ibsen

"IF YOUR ACTIONS INSPIRE OTHERS TO DREAM MORE, LEARN MORE, DO MORE AND BECOME MORE, YOU ARE A LEADER."
—John Quincy Adams