

# Leaders Aren't Born, They're Made

Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

—1 TIMOTHY 4:15–16

Becoming a leader is a lot like investing successfully in the stock market. If your hope is to make a fortune in a day, you're not going to be successful. What matters most is the long haul. My friend Tag Short maintains, "The secret of our success is found in our daily agenda." If you continually invest in your leadership development, letting your "assets" compound, the inevitable result is growth over time.<sup>1</sup>

There's an old joke: a tourist stops a New Yorker in Manhattan and asks, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" "Practice, practice, practice" is the reply. How do we get to be effective, faithful leaders? The answer is the same: it takes practice every day of our lives. Very few leaders are born leaders; most of us have to work at our leadership skills diligently every day. And even those of us

gifted at leadership from an early age know the power of practicing the art of leadership daily.

Becoming a leader is like growing in faith. Being a Christian is not only a conscious decision to follow Christ; it is a daily journey we make with our entire lives as we follow Jesus doggedly, step by step. Being a leader is a daily journey, too. It's what Paul was telling Timothy when he exhorted him to put what he learned into practice and to continue in them, for Timothy's sake and for the sake of the church Timothy led. Like faith, we devote ourselves to practicing daily what we have learned about leadership from God, our mentors and teachers, and our organizations. Success is found in our daily agendas—the decisions we make, the relationships we choose and cultivate, how we exercise and share our power. It's also about how we choose to spend our time, and the care we put into communicating with the people in our organizations and how well we listen to them—among many other things.

Skim through the last couple of months of your daily calendar or personal organizer. What does it tell you about how you are practicing your leadership skills? Is there something missing, some skill or capability you need to develop? If so, ask God to help you integrate whatever may be missing into your daily life as a leader and put these things into practice so that all may see your progress.

*Help me, O Lord, to practice being a leader  
every day even as I seek to follow after you.*

*Amen.*<sup>2</sup>

—ROBERT QUINN