

Nine Lessons from The Leadership Dance

All quotes are from [Shall We Lead? Leadership as Partnership](#),
by Gage E. Paine, Ph.D.

1. Leadership as Partnership

“Leaders need willing followers to dance and work with. Followers need leaders who are able to communicate what needs to be accomplished clearly with empathy and understanding. Each needs the other to be competent and confident. Leadership is a partnership and the best partnership is created by two equally capable and self-assured partners who understand both halves of the whole.”

2. Leading

“In other words, we find something we care about and we decide to act. It may be a small step, but our willingness to act - to make a difference - is the first step toward leading.”

3. Following

“Like leading, following takes practice. Becoming a great follower requires learning about and understanding your organization. Becoming a great follower means paying attention to what is happening around you, understanding what your leader is attempting to do, and figuring out what you can do to support that work.”

4. Be Willing to Lead

“Leaders must be willing to engage the people of their organization. They have to be ready to support them in their jobs, their learning, and their leadership. Leaders need to be prepared to learn from their organizational members, to ask for their ideas, and to listen to them. Leaders must be willing to make unpopular, difficult decisions and be able to explain their reasons for the decision.”

5. Lead with Finesse

“We need dynamic leaders who are willing to engage their partners and rally their variety of skills, talents and styles for the good of the partnership and organization. We need leaders who listen and who communicate clearly and concisely; we need leaders who can empathize. We need leaders with fitness who work with us to accomplish amazing things.”

6. Dance to the Music

“My ability to lead has improved as I have become more skilled at sharing, teaching and modeling the fundamentals of our organizational culture (the music) — the why and the how.”

7. Be Worthy of Trust

“A critical step in building trust and leading with integrity is to be clear about your values. Understanding what is important to you, the lines you won't cross, and the actions you won't take, make it more likely that your words and actions are congruent.”

8. Dancing with a New Partner

“The ability of leaders to find the balance between honoring the past and current realities while asking their partners to change is often the primary indicator of whether or not the new partnership will be successful.”

9. Be Able to Lead Anyone

“In organizations, leaders who show grace and practice forgiveness who understand failure as a necessary step to growth and learning, will often find they are working with partners who are creative, willing to take on new challenges, and glad to shoulder the work of the organization.”