

True North

Tags: [#personal-leadership](#)

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Dialogue

We all can derail -- anyone of us.

I was the kid who tried too hard to get ahead, be recognized, and be loved by others...I was young, aggressive, and brash in dealing with our corporate bosses.

What kept you from derailing?

Point --> It's important to know our shadow sides which can pull us away from truth north.

What helps?

Look at these -- and find our own tendencies:

Imposters

They are the ultimate political animals, adept at figuring out who their competitors are and then eliminating them one by one. They have little appetite for self-reflection or developing self-awareness.

WeWork's Adam Neuman

What's an indicator that a leader is drifting this way?

Aim --> self-awareness

Rationalizers

When things don't go their way, they blame external forces or subordinates. Masters of denial, they rarely take responsibility themselves.

Rajat Gupta. What went wrong?

Aim --> establish clear values. What's a value that's worked for you?

Glory Seekers

Motivated by the world's acclaim.

Greg Lindberg

When does this become problematic?

Aim --> seek intrinsic meaning in your work.

Loners

Loners avoid forming close relationships, seeking out mentors, or creating support networks. They believe they can make it on their own. Not to be confused with introverts, loners often have myriad superficial friends and acolytes but don't listen to them. They reject honest feedback, even from those who care about them.

Lehman Brothers CEO Dick Fuld

Distinction between introversion and loner?

Aim --> build trusted relationships that ground you. "Surround yourself with truth tellers."

Shooting Stars

Build shallow foundations and keep moving to the next thing.

Uber's Travis Kalanick

What about moving roles/companies often?

Aim --> Commit to an enduring purpose that makes a difference in the world and commit to it.

How you play this out:

Write down the most difficult ethical dilemma you are currently facing and chronicle the "least generous" interpretation of your actions.

Project forward a decade and assume the worst: you have derailed in a major failure. Envision the situation in which you could lose your way.

What have you changed your mind on?

Reserve

Loneliness: It is lonely at the top...Because of this loneliness, many leaders deny their fears, shutting down their inner voice because it is too uncomfortable to hear. Instead, they try to satisfy external voices pressuring them. Because the advice of outsiders is often too painful to face, some leaders listen only to people who reinforce their views.

Quotes

Leaders who focus on external gratification instead of inner satisfaction have trouble staying grounded. They reject the honest critic who holds up a mirror and speaks the truth. Instead, they surround themselves with sycophants— supporters telling them what they want to hear. Over time, they lose perspective and capacity for honest dialogue, and people learn not to confront them.

References