**Essay Characteristics of Leadership By Robert Tackett**

 When things are going well, who do you look to for inspiration and leadership? Do we really

need great leadership when things are going smooth and easy? Or do we seek and demand great

leaders when the situation seems bleak and dire? Do you look for leadership when taking your

family out for a sunny afternoon picnic? Or do you seek leadership when the bullets are flying

and the wounded are screaming? Do we worry about who will make the potato salad and bring

the sodas? Or do we worry about who is calling in support fire and the Medevac? We can argue

the attributes and best characteristics of Leadership all day. At the end of the discussion most

people will agree on the same top 10 or 12 characteristics, they will just argue on their respective

priority. I am suggesting that we consider Trust as a defining Characteristic of Leadership.

Without Trust, we would have no Leadership.

 We all know someone whom we would consider to be a good leader. It may be a family

member, a father/mother, grandfather/grandmother or maybe even an aunt or uncle who people

will turn to for advice and guidance. It may be a pastor, mayor, principal or even a president. All

these leaders will share some of the same qualities you would expect to find in someone who is

leading others. Qualities such as Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity and

Personal courage (these are the Army’s Pillars of Leadership) can be found in a good Leader.

Honesty, Commitment, Charisma, Confidence are but just a few more. We can do this all day

and argue which virtues are more important or should have a higher priority. But the bottom line

is that these qualities are subjective. Each of us, as an individual, through our own wisdom and

experiences, place subjective emphasis on those qualities we deem most important to be a

Leader. I am going to let you in on a secret. Trust. Trust is probably the most important

Characteristics of a Leader.

 Leaders do fail. Leaders do betray. Leaders do quit. This is why Trust is so very important.

Trust goes both ways, it is reciprocal. Followers “Trust” that the behaviors of Leaders are above

reproach. The followers “Trust” that a Leader has their best interests at heart. Followers “Trust”

that the Leader is sincere in their actions. Followers place a lot of trust in their Leaders. Lives,

safety and welfare may hang in the balance. Likewise, Leaders place just as much “Trust” in the

followers and even other Leaders. Leaders “Trust” that the followers will follow guidance,

advice and rules. Leaders “Trust” that others were raised with good intentions and have the

common good uppermost in their minds. Leaders “Trust” that other Leaders will do the right

thing. So no matter which characteristic is chosen to exemplify a Leader, it all still comes back to

“Trust”. “Trust” that people, society and humanity will work together towards a common goal.

 Leaders Trust that the Followers were raised by their parents right. Leaders Trust that

Followers were taught by their respective teachers adequately. There is so much Trust going and

receiving from both the Led and the Leaders that Trust must be discussed as one of the most

important attributes of a good Leader. I would challenge you, the reader, to pick any three

people you would consider to be “good Leaders” and think about how much you trust their

leadership skills. What happens when a Leader betrays that Trust or cannot live up to the

expectations? Well then, they no longer Lead, do they?

 Look at the roles we consider to be of Leadership criteria; military commanders, law

enforcement officers, fire department commanders, surgical team physicians, search and rescue

commanders even politicians. Positions in which others rely on (TRUST) for the greater good

are generally known as leadership roles. We trust the people in these roles with our lives, family

and finances. Would we consider a farmer a leader? A plumber? Perhaps as an ancillary role of

father, neighborhood watch leader or even little league coach they are leaders. What about

bankers (the bank manager, not the teller). Would a writer be considered a Leader? When

discussing the qualities of leadership, we must not forget to put Trust uppermost in the category.

Trust, trust is a defining character of a great leader.