

**WHAT YOUR FOLLOWERS WANT YOU TO KNOW....**

Consider your personal journey to leadership. How did it happen?

Many leaders (and plenty of perfectly competent ones) became leaders by default rather than design. In my live workshops, when I ask why someone became a leader, they tend to say things like; “I was promoted!” – or “An opportunity occurred”. – or “I was ready for the next step”.

Most leaders haven’t examined their own leadership traits and styles. What got them noticed that led to the promotion? Why were THEY successful in taking up the opportunity that came along? What MADE them ready for that ‘next step’?

This exercise, designed by a follower, wants you to consider why YOU got the job (and someone else DIDN’T). Think about it... there are fewer Leaders than there are other members of staff, so there’s obviously something about you!

<b>Steps in the journey</b>	<b>Score out of 10</b>
I was formally invested in. Money and resource were made available for my training and development	
I was singled out for the job of management and leadership by virtue of formal and informal trait assessment rather than – or in addition to – technical competence (i.e. observable attitude, psychometric test, prior education/experience, appropriate achievements, aptitude assessment etc)	
I was trained, coached, and mentored specifically in management & leadership. I was assigned a coach or mentor.	
I studied and learned formally and informally. Studied an MBA or Management qualification. Learned from (e.g.) Ted talks and books.	
I practiced, I was delegated to and challenged. My own leader resourced this actively contributing to my development	
I made mistakes (and was allowed to) yet supported and nurtured. My own leader facilitated this.	
I became qualified, experienced, and competent – thus deserving of the right to lead/manage other people	

Most leaders will not have thought of what happened to them as being any different to what happened to their colleagues. Self-awareness is a great leadership skill. If you don’t know why you are a leader – how can you expect your followers to?

#### THE PETER PRINCIPLE

The concept was explained in the book *The Peter Principle* (William Morrow and Company, 1969) by Dr Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull.

Peter and Hull apparently intended the book to be satire, but it became popular as it was seen to make a serious point about the shortcomings of how people are promoted within hierarchical organisations. Hull wrote the text, based on Peter's research. The Peter Principle has been the subject of much subsequent commentary and research.



#### ALL ABOUT COMPETENCE (OR NOT!)

The Peter principle states that a person who is competent at their job will tend to earn promotion to a more senior position (which requires different skills). If the promoted person lacks the skills required for their new role, then they will be incompetent at their new level, and so they will not be promoted again.

But if they **are** competent at their new role, then they **will** be promoted again, and will continue to be promoted until they eventually reach a level at which they are incompetent. Being incompetent, they do not qualify to be promoted again, and so remain stuck at that final level for the rest of their career (termed "Final Placement" or "Peter's Plateau").

This outcome is inevitable, given enough time and assuming that there are enough positions in the hierarchy to which competent employees may be promoted. The "Peter Principle" is therefore expressed as:

**"In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to their level of incompetence."**

This leads to Peter's Corollary: "In time, every post tends to be occupied by an employee who is incompetent to carry out its duties."

Is there truth to this? You decide... (some followers already have)!