

# **Meredith Gardner Warns About Forgotten Flip Side Of Leadership: Followership**

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Meredith Gardner Ph.D., owner and founder of New York, NY based The Strategic Edge, warns that the flip side of leadership, which is followership, is often forgotten when it comes to training programs. Followership refers to the role of certain individuals in a group, a team or an organization. Specifically, it is the capacity of an individual to actively follow a leader. It is the reciprocal of the social process of leadership.

Gardner says: "Shockingly, there is little training for this followership role. I intend to remedy this by creating new and innovative seminars around the needs of people in their companies - to address and include issues such as trust, team work, communication, and so on."

Followership is a recognized part of leadership psychology. According to Gardner, how well a leader can lead is incredibly important, but this would be rendered useless if followers are unable to follow well. Followers are very important in an organization and play a huge role in both the success and failure of an organization. "In my years of doing leadership development, I have found that the personality of many followers often lacks ambition and self-reliance. Not all of them are like that but many are," adds Meredith Gardner. "Mostly, they do not want any spotlight of them, and they are happy to just take directions from others."

She adds: "The result is that such people would just relax because they don't have the responsibility for developing the vision, mission, and overseeing the follow through. Most importantly, they don't have the personality, charisma, talent and energy of the big time leaders. And while this is just fine with them, this is detrimental to the organization. They need assistance in a lot of areas to be better followers. They need to obtain certain skills, such as developing trust and courage both within themselves and with others."

According to Meredith Gardner, there are four main qualities found in effective followers. These are self-management, commitment, competence, and courage. Gardner is one of the first to place a focus on followership, which she points out is just as important as leadership. She ends: "Without followers to take the directions of the leaders, an organization simply cannot function. I will emphasize this during my seminars, helping business grow by building on talent where it is found."

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*The Strategic Edge is an Interpersonal Communication Company. Meredith Gardner, Ph.D., is a noted behavioral psychologist, author, speaker & media guest.*

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