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How Can You Be Sure Someone Has True Leadership Skills? Look

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How Can You Be Sure Someone Has Tr

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Leadership seems to come naturally to some, though it may come at a price. You first need to *grow up*. So declares venture capitalist-turned-leadership coach Jerry Colonna, the "CEO Whisperer" [I recently interviewed](#) known to make founders and [CEOs cry](#) by asking tough personal questions.

[Colonna](#) says those questions are the only ones [worth asking](#) if a leader

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really wants to evolve and reach the next level. He won't hand leaders a roadmap. Instead, he tells them to grow up--understanding the "why" behind everyday choices rather than focusing on the "how."

Colonna guides leaders through this growing up process by asking them to dive head-first into the concept of radical self-inquiry. In other words, he asks them to feel.

These sales reps were amazing peop

Some leaders have pushed back any suggestion they "sit in silence to face personal demons," but when they do, they emerge ready to stand and embrace leadership without fear.

6 Steps to Optimize Leadership

In his new book, [REBOOT: Leadership and the Art of Growing Up](#), Colonna explains the value -- and challenges -- of self-inquiry, with key steps to more effective leadership.

1. Ask for help.

It's easy to become mired in self-criticism when you begin to notice who you are. If you are struggling, stop pretending and allow yourself to get help. We learn to do this as children, but quickly forget to ask for help as we grow older.

2. Put in the work.

Spend time getting to know yourself -- your strengths, your struggles, your true intentions. Look at the characteristics you'd rather ignore. Spend time sitting in silence, ask tough questions and answer honestly. There is no hiding from yourself.

3. Understand that it will be all right.

Learning to survive is more important than being a great leader --- in fact, the two are inseparable. Great leaders are survivors. Know that even if things don't go as planned, you'll be okay. Resiliency is the antecedent to equanimity.

4. Return the favor.

Practice asking a genuine "How are you?" Mean it when you say it. Say it slowly and with emphasis and pay attention to the person in front of you. Be genuinely curious. Stay open and listen to replies. You are not alone in your thoughts and feelings.

5. Put yourself out there.

Honestly answer the question "How are you?" Not the throwaway line we exchange without thinking ("I'm fine, thanks. How are you?"). Are you feeling sad? Say it. Do you love the world? Let others know it. Look for recognition in the person you're talking to. Notice how isolation shifts, even if it's just a tiny bit.

6. Remove the mask.

We are master self-deceivers. Most of us start lying to ourselves when we begin lying to others. We wear masks that we want other people to see and attempt to hide away the real parts of ourselves. Self-deception is a form of survival that serves no beneficial purpose. If you want to lead, you have to remove the mask.

Colonna doesn't believe that life's patterns are the results of a vengeful or willful God or other supernatural force. He believes that we have the power to shape our lives, but we can only accomplish this by sitting in silence and getting to know our true selves -- and not the selves we want to project.

Putting yourself out there isn't easy, but it is the only way to be who you really are, Colonna believes. Not only will unveiling your true self lead to more confident leadership, it will result in better, happier, more resilient people. And that can fuel a pivotal shift in any company or career.

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