

# **Preparation for Adulthood: Supervising for Success**

## **Highlights from**

### **Learning How YOU Learn to Lead®**

Simply stated, people who are engaged in learning activities perform better as leaders. There is no one approach to learning to lead – successful leaders approach new opportunities with both a willingness to learn as well as an appreciation for the value of the learning experience. In learning to lead, there are three key strategies highlighted in Kouzes and Posner's, *The Leadership Challenge*: experience, example and education.

#### ***EXPERIENCE***

Experience is about learning through trial and error. When successful leaders are asked about how they learned to lead, they cite experience almost twice as often as example and nearly three times as often as education. It comes down to “learning by doing” and learning from trial and error. The more practice you have with leading, the more likely you are to become a good leader.

It's important to keep in mind that you have to challenge yourself in your quest to become a great leader. Boring or routine tasks won't improve your skills and abilities – you have to stretch yourself!

#### ***EXAMPLE***

You can learn to lead by observing others. Role models are essential to learning how to lead. Actively seek out role models, mentors, and coaches. Don't be shy about asking for permission to watch them in action, for help, or for feedback about your own leadership style.

Take advantage of the relationship you have with your immediate supervisor. This person may serve as one of your role models and is also in a position to give you valuable feedback about your day-to-day performance. If your supervisor is not someone you'd identify as a role model, you can still observe them for pointers on what NOT to do in a leadership position. Also consider looking to your peers as sources of knowledge, skill, and information. Be open to asking trusted colleagues for feedback and suggestions about your personal performance.

#### ***EDUCATION***

Formal Training and education can help bolster your chances for being a successful leader. Training provides opportunities for focused attention on a specific subject as well as a safe environment in which to test out new skills. Once you've gone through training, be sure to apply your new knowledge and skills in your day-to-day practice.

Adapted from Kouzes and Posner (2003) *The Leadership Challenge*