Talking about leaders

eslvideo.com Quiz by: sofiiaobert

1. What do great leaders often seem like?

○ a.) Calm and reasoned individuals

○ b.) Shy and quiet people

○ c.) Uncertain and confused individuals

2. What does Susan Cain call the idea of confident extroverted leaders?

○ a.) The Introvert Ideal

○ b.) The Extrovert Ideal

○ c.) The Leader Ideal

3. What percentage of top executives are extroverts according to the study?

○ a.) 50%

○ b.) 75%

○ c.) 98%

4. Who are some examples of successful leaders with a quieter approach?

○ a.) Rosa Parks and Mahatma Gandhi

○ b.) Steve Jobs and Elon Musk

○ c.) Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt

5. What do introverts often do better than extroverts?

○ a.) Speak quickly

○ b.) Listen and process ideas

○ c.) Take risks

6. What can introverts feel in meetings?

○ a.) Very confident

○ b.) Invisible

○ c.) Overwhelmed by attention

7. What do many leadership courses focus on?

○ a.) Quiet reflection

○ b.) Extroverted team activities

○ c.) Individual work

8. What is a disservice to everyone according to the speaker?

○ a.) Focusing on introverted qualities

○ b.) Ignoring quieter people in leadership

○ c.) Encouraging teamwork

9. What does the speaker suggest about leadership in today's world?

○ a.) It should be loud and aggressive

○ b.) It should involve listening and reflection

○ c.) It should focus on individual success

10. What does Lao Tzu say about the best leaders?

○ a.) They talk a lot

○ b.) They talk little

○ c.) They are always in charge

Transcript

Look at the leaders around you. What do you see? Calm, reasoned individuals, who listen, and make considered judgements? Or something very different?

Great leaders are often seen as classic confident, extroverts who can speak without thinking, react rapidly and change tack pretty frequently. It's what best-selling author Susan Cain calls "The Extrovert Ideal". But is this really what we need right now?

I'd argue that the crises of our time need a more considered approach. A quieter one.

Let's look at the status quo. Extroverts are over-represented in senior leadership positions. One study found an incredible 98% of top executives scoring "very high" or "above average" on the extrovert scale. But people aren't on the whole satisfied with their leaders. Could there be a connection between the two?

There are lots of examples through history of successful leaders who have taken that quieter approach. For example, Rosa Parks, Mahatma Gandhi, or Bill Gates.

Research shows that introverts often bring a great deal to the table. They're more likely to listen and process the ideas of their team, and consider those ideas deeply before acting on them. They may be humble and more likely to credit their team for ideas and performance. And because their motivation generally comes from within, they're less likely to compromise themselves chasing rewards like money or power.

I think we need to re-examine the way our society views effective leadership, and whether we really are allowing the space for all team members to thrive.

Research suggests that between 40 and 60% of employees tend to the quieter, more introverted, side of things. They can often feel invisible in meetings, because their thoughtful approach means they have difficulty responding to those common on the spot questions.

Many leadership courses can tend to focus on extroverted team activities, such as networking and presentations, leaving quieter people perhaps mistakenly believing they just don't have the qualities of a "good" leader.

An approach that fails to bring out the best in around half of us is not just bad for quieter people, it's a disservice to us all.

Leadership is complex, but in a world of soundbites, sledgehammer tactics and black-and-white thinking, perhaps standing back and listening can be empowering to leaders and their followers.

As the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu puts it, the best leaders are those that "talk little" and when their work is done and their aims fulfilled, their followers will say, "We did it ourselves."