



## **I. Leadership**

# **What is Leadership ?**

## **Principles of Leadership:**

Who does society think of as leaders? Who do you think of as leaders? Which leader do you want to emulate?

The first step to becoming a leader is to recognize what a leader is. Appearing to be a leader is not the same as *being* a leader. Dominant people, elected and appointed officials are some of the types of people that society has taught us to consider as leaders. Sometimes they are leaders, but just as often they fail the test of leadership.

Dominant people, elected and appointed officials can be leaders, but only if they understand and live the principles of leadership.

There are four basic principles to leadership. Every good leader has these principles and their success stem from these basics.

To be a leader you must have these four principles:

**1. Courage** - Courage to stand up and be counted for your beliefs and opinions.

**2. Responsibility** - Accept responsibility for your decisions and actions.

**3. Encouragement** - Empower others by delegation.

**4. Improvement** - Constantly improve yourself.

These principles are developed by having optimism, confidence, and a drive to succeed. You must be optimistic about the future and the people you are working for. You must have the confidence to do what you know is right and necessary. You must have a desire to accomplish your vision.

### **1. Leaders Have The Courage To Stand Up And Be Counted For Their Beliefs And Opinions.**

Being a leader requires you to let others know where you stand on the important issues. Until people know what you believe in, and that you will stand up and be counted for that opinion, they will not trust you as their leader. As they learn about and understand your core beliefs and opinions they will build their confidence in you. If they know that you are true to your own beliefs, then they can trust that you will be true to their Grange.

Leaders have a compelling and achievable vision for the future. They know where the Grange needs to be and share that knowledge with the members around them. People want to have direction and goals and they expect their leaders to take them somewhere.

When people know where you're taking them, they are willing to forgive and forget small mistakes, because you are leading them where they want to go.

## **2. Leaders Accept Responsibility For Their Decisions And Actions.**

Being a leader means that you will take the lumps for bad decisions and failed actions as well as accepting credit for good decisions and successful actions. Leaders take the heat for unpopular actions even when that action is necessary and/or done by others. They back their leadership team members when decisions are made and give them a safe place to learn from their mistakes.

Leaders will make necessary and proper decisions even if they know it will be unpopular. Regardless of how popular a leader is, if the people trust them, they will follow them. While this doesn't mean that they will elect or chose you as their leader the next time, it does mean they will respect and value your opinions and knowledge. Leaders know that it is more valuable to create growth in the Grange than to be popular.

You take care of your members. You provide educational opportunities for them so that they will grow as leaders. You help them as much as possible to be successful by mentoring them and opening doors where ever possible. You have compassion for them and encourage them to take care of themselves both physically and mentally. You understand that only healthy and happy people can devote the time necessary to creating growth in your Grange.

## **3. Leaders Encourage And Empower Others To Succeed By Building A Team.**

Leaders know that they can't do everything and will give others the opportunity to try their hand at leading. Giving others the opportunity to try new things, to be on or chair a committee, encouraging them to better

themselves, and asking them for their opinions are important ways to empowering people.

Leaders observe what is going on around them. When a leader notices that someone is left out, they will take the time to help that person and find a place for them.

Empowering other people is how to build a team and leaders must build a strong team to succeed. Teams are built of people with different talents and abilities working together for a common goal.

A strong team will be constantly changing as people leave and others take their place. Teams also grow in numbers so that more activities can happen. Good leadership requires that other people be empowered if the organization is to succeed.

## **4. Leaders Constantly Strive To Improve Themselves.**

Leaders attend conferences, seminars, and meetings in order to learn how to be better leaders. They read books and articles on different aspects of leadership.

They talk regularly with other leaders and often take the time to "pick the brains" or "mine the experience" of people they respect.

A leader provides training as he knows that everyone must improve if the team is to succeed. An important secondary effect of training others, is that the leader learns from the process of teaching.

Leaders analyze their actions and try to learn what they did right or wrong so that they can duplicate or avoid that action in the future. The past is a place to learn and the leader knows it is necessary to understand what happened and why it happened in order to create the desired future.

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### Identify Leaders By Their Actions:

Understanding the principles of leadership brings you to the traits of leaders. Leaders should be always defined by their actions. Anyone can say that they are a leader and tell others how wonderful they are, but what they do is the trademark of leadership. Judging a leader by any other standard other than their actions is highly suspect.

These actions or traits allow you to judge other leaders and to improve your own leadership skills. People who fail to act are not leaders and those who disregard these traits of leadership do not have the Grange's success at heart and fail the test of leadership.

#### Does The Right Thing

- ◆ Has a strong moral code. The leader knows that the end does not justify the means. Without a strong code of conduct you are unpredictable and can not build trust within the membership.

- ◆ Accepts responsibility for mistakes. The leader doesn't blame others for his mistakes.

- ◆ Apologizes when responsible. The leader says "I'm sorry" when someone gets hurt, even when it isn't their fault.

- ◆ Makes the hard decisions. The leader makes the right decision even if it will make them unpopular.

- ◆ Enforces rules equally. The leader enforces the rules equally and consistently to everyone, even friends.

#### More Often Right Than Wrong

- ◆ Has confidence in themselves. A leader knows that he is capable and he is willing, often even eager, to take on a challenge.

- ◆ Surrounds themselves with successful and positive people. A leader knows that you are judged by the company you keep. The leader also wants to learn from those around him, and who better to learn from than other successful people.

- ◆ Over time their track record shows they mostly made the correct decisions. History often shows true leadership in a much clearer light than the events of today.

#### Has A Vision

- ◆ Is always positive about the vision and goals. The leader knows where he wants to go and where the Grange needs to go. The leader knows that he must always be positive to keep everyone focused and working together to accomplish the goals and vision.

- ◆ Sincere in their belief in the vision. Insincerity destroys the common goal and the leader will not fake belief as he knows others will see through it. The leader knows that achieving the vision is possible in the future, even when unattainable today.

- ◆ Communicates what their vision is. A leader lets the followers know where they are

going. A leader inspires and motivates others to follow him rather than testing the winds to see which way to go.

## **Learns**

◆ Listens to everyone, not just supporters. A leader knows that to build a successful team, he must listen to everyone. Often detractors have ideas that can be incorporated into the groups goals.

◆ Is fair and even handed to everyone. The leader will chastise his friends and reward his opponents if it is deserved. A leader knows that being known as fair to everyone is important in developing trust and respect.

◆ Uses opportunities to learn. A leader will ask questions to learn from anyone, will attend meetings and make the most of them to learn how to be a better leader. When attending a conference or seminar will talk with other participants to add value to his time.

◆ Reads to learn. A leader will read books and articles to learn better ways to lead.

◆ Searches for more knowledge. A leader will use every method available to learn more. A leader considers knowledge to be the beginning of wisdom and wants as much information as possible. He is willing to invest his time and money to learn new methods and technology.

## **Sets The Example**

◆ Follows the rules. A leader follows the rules because it is the right thing to do and because to fail in following the rules encourages others to break the rules. None of the rules can be effectively enforced if some rules are broken by the leader. People will not tolerate rules if they are not equally enforced.

◆ Follows the highest ethical code when dealing with others. The leader must deal honorable with everyone, or the leader will not be trusted. The Grange will also suffer the

same lack of trust or respect as the leader. This can hurt the Grange long after the leader has been replaced.

◆ Gets their own hands dirty with tough jobs. The leader must do many of the dirty or tough jobs in order to be respected. Also helping with basic jobs, shows that you don't consider yourself more important than the rest of the members in your Grange.

## **Knows When To Follow**

◆ Delegates. A leader gives responsibility and opportunities to others. The leader gives credit to others to recognize and encourage them.

◆ Gives help and assistance when others are leading. A leader gives of his knowledge to help other leaders. A leader knows that the team cannot succeed if the leader fails. The leader also works through the Grange to create success.

◆ When stepping down from a position, lets the new leader determine their own direction. A leader doesn't criticize a new leader for trying new things or changing the direction of the Grange. A leader will continue working with the Grange and share his opinions.

◆ Never undermines other leaders. A leader never works behind the scenes or takes cheap shots to undermine other leaders. If the leader disagrees with the current direction, he does so publicly and encourages a debate upon the issue so that the Grange can choose the direction. A leader knows that due to his former position he can influence many and is cautious about exercising his influence.

By looking at these leadership traits not only will you be able to identify other leaders, but you can judge yourself to see if you are acting like a leader. Your leadership traits will show others who you really are. Actions determine what kind of leader you are.

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### Developing Yourself As A Grange Leader:

If you want to become a leader the best place to start is at the bottom. It is difficult to become an effective leader by starting at the top. While effective leaders can come into an organization from the outside and in a short time be able to make a difference, to lead in the Grange you must understand the basics.

**Insiders make the changes.** If your goal is to help your Grange, the only way for you to accomplish your goal is to be a part of the group. By participating in a variety of activities you will learn different things about your organization. You will also build trust in your fellow members because they will see that you are willing to get your hands dirty.

Every organization has a core of people who do most of the work. They will respect anyone who pitches in and helps get the job done. This group will give you the most trouble, or help, when you are the leader. Working with them will lead to a greater chance of success.

With this core group as your allies, you can propose changes in rules, programs, or other areas that will promote growth of the Grange. As an active member, you will have opportunities to initiate change within your Grange.

**Follow the rules.** Every organization has two types of rules. Written and unwritten. The first thing to do is understand what the rules are for your Grange.

Written rules are referred to as Bylaws and policies. Bylaws are a formal framework for the Grange to work within. These rules enable the group to function effectively and everyone must follow them. Policies are set at each meeting and are often only kept in the minute book.

Unwritten rules are more difficult to learn. Find a member who has been around for a long time and start asking questions. Often the member will be pleased that someone wants to learn from them and will share willingly. Watch what each officer does, and try to find out if what they do is tradition or just their style. Once you are in a leadership position, you will have the opportunity to perform the traditional unwritten rules and start adding your style and direction to them.

**Ethics.** It is said that ethics are what you do when no one is around and looking or could find out. Ethics deal with the honesty of yourself as a person. If you want to become a leader in your organization it is essential that you act in an ethical manner.

### “Your Personal Ethics Will Be The Ethics Of Your Grange”

This statement is critical to every leader. The quickest way for a leader to harm a group is for that leader to act in an unethical fashion.

If you choose to act in an unethical way, you will destroy others trust in you and cause your followers to look somewhere else for

leadership. People in leadership positions who don't act in an ethical manner do great harm to their organization.

A liar will destroy other organizations trust in the Grange. Those leaders who follow an unethical leader will have to spend their initial time rebuilding that trust instead of building on solid existing relationships.

**Behavior:** How you behave is critical to your leadership. If you act one way in public and a different way in small private gatherings, the word will get out. If you tell people that you don't care if you get elected and then when you don't, you get angry publicly or in private, people will not trust you. It is OK to have feelings of anger or frustration as long as you are not deceptive about it.

A leader's behavior is what builds trust. Once people realize that your public behavior is different from your private behavior they will not follow you.

How you treat people publicly and privately also is an important part of your ethical behavior. You are not required to like everybody, but you must treat all with respect. If you belittle people privately, you may create enemies for yourself, your programs, and even the Grange.

If you treat people differently under the same situations, you will create division within your group. A divided group will not work together and success will elude you.

**Attitude:** "Your attitude as a leader will become the attitude of the Grange" You cannot have different attitudes for different people. Your members will adopt your attitude over time. If you believe in something, your attitude will bring people to your goal.

When you talk publicly or privately about your Grange, you must be positive. If you do not have a positive attitude toward the Grange

and its future, you are in deep trouble. A positive attitude is critical to your success. Members will not follow a negative attitude, and they will find out if your positive attitude isn't genuine.

Your attitude as leader should not be any different than your attitude as a member. Who you are should not change because you become the leader. You may restrain yourself from certain things during formal occasions to preserve the dignity of the office, but you should remain true to yourself.

**Learn the process.** Learn how your Grange makes changes. The Grange uses a modified form of Roberts Rules of Order to conduct its parliamentary procedure. Motions and written resolutions to initiate change in the Grange. Make sure that you understand how they work and how to initiate change.

Once you understand the process used to make changes, begin helping others to learn the process. The more people in your group who know how to make changes through the established process, the stronger the Grange will be. Teaching others the Grange's process will also ensure that you know the fine points of the process.

**Exercise your rights.** Every American organization gives its members certain rights. If you want to be a Grange leader, you must exercise your basic rights.

Making motions on issues of importance, writing resolutions on critical topics, and debating the issues of the day are ways to get people to notice that you care and are willing to stand up. It is also the best way to gain experience in expressing yourself in the Grange and to your fellow members.

Use your voice and vote to build before you are an elected or appointed leader and members will look to you for leadership.

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### Limiting Factors:

There are only three basic factors that can limit what you and your Grange can accomplish. But, they are powerful limiters. They can cripple your efforts, and prevent you from accomplishing anything or even cause your Grange to cease to exist. These limiting factors are you, your Granges' mission, and your Granges resources.

#### You

You are the greatest limiting factor the Grange faces. You can not avoid or go around this limiting factor. Your skills as leader will determine how far the Grange will go. Whatever your best is today, the Grange will be able to do a little less than that.

Dynamic organizations have dynamic leaders, creative organizations have creative leaders, and ineffectual organizations have ineffectual leaders. Look around and you will find that organizations, including Granges, rise and fall with their leaders. The better leader a Grange has, the more it will accomplish.

You can change this limiting factor by changing and improving yourself. As your abilities increase so will the potential of your group. Your ability to learn and improve is crucial to improving the Grange.

Knowing that you are the greatest limiting factor to the Grange means you must improve yourself to the highest extent possible. As long as your leadership skills are growing and improving, so will the Grange.

Knowing that the leader is the greatest limiting factor to the Grange, you also must also develop others into better leaders to ensure the long term success of the Grange.

#### Mission of the Grange

The second strongest limiting factor is the mission of the Grange. This limiting factor will only apply when you desire to expand the activities of the group. If you move into an area that is outside the Grange's mission, you will have difficulties with both your members and with public perception.

The public perception of the Grange's mission will limit you. If your mission has not been accepted or understood by the public, you must change or create public perception before the Grange can be successful.

If the public doesn't understand the mission of the Grange, it is also highly likely that your members don't fully understand the mission. You must work with the membership to ensure that the public understands the Grange's mission. The Grange mission must be understood by your membership before you can successfully share your vision with the public.

#### Grange Resources

The resources that the Grange has will also be a limiting factor. This is the easiest limiting factor to change. It often seems to be the most difficult, but solutions can be reached by determined members and capable leadership. The two major resources that make the most impact are personnel and financial.

**Personnel** - The number and quality of the Grange's active membership is very important. The more people who want to work together, the better off you are. If you have few active members, you may have great difficulty in recruiting new members or in reactivating longtime members. Yet it can be done and many Granges have gone from a handful of people to a large working group in a short period of time.

The more leaders that are in the Grange the easier it will be to recruit more members to get the work done. If you have few leaders, then you must recruit people with leadership abilities to assist in building the group. In addition, you must encourage existing members to become leaders.

You must find ways to let nonmembers know how the Grange fills their needs. People join organizations because of their needs. If the Grange fills their needs, you will be successful in increasing the membership.

**Financial** - The financial resources of your Grange are often viewed as the hardest limiting factor to overcome, but it is normally the easiest. Money in the bank, a building and/or property all are tremendous resources.

The key to raising funds is that people will donate to and support "worth while" causes. If public perception is that the Grange is not worth while, you will need to change public perception while you work on raising funds.

In an established Grange, often the hardest thing is to convince members that the spaghetti dinner that has raised \$50 a year for the last 20 years is not worth doing anymore. A new fund raiser that has potential to raise hundreds or thousands of dollars will bring new enthusiasm and excitement if you can lead the way.

Leaders find ways to create money for their Grange. There are 4 basic ways to raise funds

for any organization. They are:

**1. Membership dues or fees.** These are the monies that members pay to belong to your Grange. These dues can range from eight dollars annually to hundreds of dollars for a life membership.

Every organization should determine what the value of membership is worth and charge a reasonable amount of money for it.

If you charge too little, the members may perceive that you offer little in value. If dues are too low the public will question what you could do for so little money.

If your dues are too high, members will drop because they can't afford membership and few will join. However, if after a dues raise, some members drop but others continue to join, the dues are not too high.

**2. Affiliate Services.** These are when companies pay the Grange to have access to your membership to sell goods or services. The key to any affiliate program is that they offer a reasonably priced, quality product or service that your members want or need.

**3. Solicitation.** You can solicit your members or the general public for funds. General letters asking for donations or sending a gift, such as address labels or Christmas cards, and requesting a donation can be very successful.

**4. Sales/Fund-raisers.** Many Granges sell products to their members and the public. However, the primary purpose of many sales items is to promote the Grange rather than to generate income. Fund-raisers consisting of dinners, raffles, bingo, as well as a myriad of other activities can raise money for your Grange. Each locality has laws governing these fund-raisers that you need to be aware of.

Whatever method of fund raising you chose to use, any Grange can create new revenue to accomplish their vision and goals.

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### Learn About & Evaluate Your Grange:

Ask yourself, “What do I know about my Grange?” Ask yourself questions and if you don’t know the answers, begin asking questions of others. Let the long time members of your group give you some of the answers. They will appreciate being asked to share their knowledge and experience.

**Rules** - Begin by understanding the rules that govern your Grange. Both the written framework and the unwritten rules should be understood. If it is possible find out why certain rules were adopted. Was there a problem or did someone write a permanent rule to deal with a temporary situation?

**Traditions** - Take time to observe the traditions of your organization. Remember that to break traditions is risky and you should understand what is expected and why it is important to the group. Traditions come in three basic varieties.

**1. “It’s an important part of who we are.”** This tradition may be a ceremony or project that most members enjoy and they believe to be important. These are difficult to change and any attempt to change them must be made cautiously or the leader may suffer the wrath of the members.

**2. “The sacred cow.”** This tradition often has much vocal support. These are extremely difficult to change in a short time. Over time

a leader may change this type to the third type and then change or eliminate it. Emotions will often run high on changing this tradition.

**3. “We’ve always done it this way.”** Of the different types of traditions, this is the easiest tradition to change.

**History** - Learn about the history of your Grange. When was it successful and what activities and programs were responsible during those peak times. When and why did it have down times or go into periods of decline.

Don’t expect to find all the answers as time has a way of covering many things. The knowledge of history will give you ideas that may work well now. Every Grange has quit doing something that would help them with their problems today.

**Statistics** - As you learn about the history of your Grange keep track of numbers. Statistics can be very helpful if you are honest with the figures. They can help you lift the spirits of members when all is apparently dark or inspire them to greater achievements.

As an example, your members are depressed about declining membership and believe it is too difficult to recruit new members. You may use statistics to show that people are joining but drop out after a year or two in order to get members to face the real problem of not filling the needs of current members.

Statistics will not normally solve problems, but they may suggest solutions and can be helpful in convincing members that your pro-

posed idea is well thought out. The more people you buy into your vision, the greater chance of success you have.

## **Evaluate Your Grange**

If you are going to lead your Grange forward you must take the time to evaluate the current condition of the group. Make sure you understand the current active membership.

### **List the morale and attitude of your members:**

You must know what the morale and attitude of your members is. The morale and attitude of members is critical to determine how you approach the future. Will your first task be raising morale or changing attitudes or will you be building on a positive base?

### **List the programs and activities of your Grange:**

Take a look at the current programs and activities and see if they are relevant in accomplishing the mission of your Grange. If the programs and activities are relevant to the membership and community are they effective?

If a program or activity is no longer relevant, how will members or the public respond to its elimination? Is it a tradition or just another activity?

If the program or activity is not effective, could it become effective if changes are made?

### **List the weaknesses of your Grange:**

The purpose of listing weaknesses is not to dwell on them, but to change them to strengths. Older membership, buildings in poor condition, or a lack of money are all

weaknesses that could affect the Grange.

Once you know what the weaknesses are, it then becomes your job to find ways of turning those weaknesses into strengths. Older members often cannot do heavy physical work, but can offer much life experience to benefit your Grange.

### **List the strengths of your Grange:**

Look for members who have experience to take on new projects and give them opportunities. Look for members who are dedicated to working for the group and find a job for them. Look for the financial resources to enable a project be completed. Itemize these strengths and then use them.

You will find that some weaknesses are also strengths from a different perspective.

Every weakness that you eliminate will make the Grange stronger. Every person that changes from a negative to a positive attitude will help you take the Grange to new heights. Sometimes even swinging a member from being opposed to being skeptical can make a positive difference for you.

### **List the public perception of your Grange:**

Public perception is the beginning of reality. If people think the Grange is a senior citizen group, you soon will be if you don't change their perception of you.

Maybe the public doesn't realize that the Grange is still alive, or perhaps has never heard of the organization.

By evaluating your Grange, you prioritize what you need to focus on to build your Grange. Basing your actions on knowledge rather than perception will aid you.

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### Learn About & Evaluate Yourself:

Take the time to look at yourself, your abilities, and your support. As the leader you will be called upon to do many things. Some you will have done before and others will create new experiences for you.

The objective of evaluating yourself is to allow you to discover the areas of strength and weakness you have. After identifying these areas, you can build on your strengths and work to minimize your weaknesses.

Each leadership position will require similar skills, but in different areas. To be a well rounded leader, you must understand the fundamentals of each area.

**Public Speaking:** Many people regard public speaking as a fate worse than death. While many leaders never really enjoy the “public speaking” experience they do become good at it. Good public speaking takes preparation and practice, even for those who enjoy it.

The most important thing to remember is that good public speaking is merely successful communication from you to the audience.

It always best to keep the audience in mind. Remember the purpose of your speech is for the audience to remember part of it. If your speech is too long, they will only remember how hard the seats are.

Regardless of the length of the speech you will need at least three sections to your speech. (1) Opening or introduction; (2) Body; and (3) Closing or wrap up. Essentially with most speeches you tell them what you are going to tell them, you tell them, and you tell them what you told them.

**Finances:** As a leader, you should be able to read a simple financial statement and understand how the records are kept. Your Grange should have a budget and you should understand it.

If you understand the finances, you can help the treasurer by spotting mistakes and correcting them before they become public. You also help the organization by preventing wrongdoing by those keeping the financial records. Many Granges have lost funds due to their complete trust in the treasurer. It is the leadership’s responsibility to ensure the accuracy and safety of the Grange’s funds.

**Record keeping:** A good secretary is invaluable as a leader in any Grange. However, every leader should understand those duties.

Accurate and complete minutes, timely correspondence, and timely and accurate reporting to the State Grange are all an important part of the duties of the secretary.

Incorporation, tax status, and other factors can require extensive record keeping and re-

porting. All leaders should be aware of the legal requirements and do their part to ensure that they are met.

**Social conversation:** Be aware of what is “politically correct” for your Grange. While most people don’t think about their skill in social conversation, being prepared may prevent you from “putting your foot in your mouth.”

Make sure that you follow current affairs enough to talk about the issues of the day. Be ready to talk about someone else’s topic. Most people prefer to talk about their interests, rather than yours.

Make sure that you are always positive in your comments. You will seldom have cause to regret your words if you only speak of others in positive ways.

**Organization** - Being organized is important for every leader. The level of organization will vary considerably, but organization is critical.

If you can’t find things regularly you must become more organized. Some people use a file cabinet, while others use binders to keep their paperwork organized. Whatever method you use, be sure to use it continually. You can not be organized if you don’t use your method consistently.

If you miss events or meetings often you must learn to manage your time better. Whether you use a calendar, organizer book, or electronic planner, you can be a more organized person. The most knowledgeable person can not be effective for the group if they are not organized.

**Support Team:** Your support team will help you be a better and stronger leader. Your sup-

port team will include family, advisors, and the leadership team of your Grange.

Family: Every leader should recognize the support that their family gives them. That support may be in attending meetings and public support or in allowing the leader to spend time with the Grange that could be spent on family activities.

Advisors: Every leader should develop a circle of advisors. These are the people who are honest with you. They will tell you when you are wrong and advise you when things are difficult. Advisors may be family, friends, co-workers, mentors, or other leaders.

These advisors are people you trust to brainstorm with, to give you advice, to keep confidences. No leader should ever feel that there is no one to talk to. Advisors ensure that you are not alone, even in the most difficult of times.

Leadership Team: The leadership team of your group is a part of your support team. They are your best way to keep the Grange moving forward. Your leadership team consists of two parts. Those elected to serve with you and those appointed or selected by you. Those you appoint should be a part of your vision for the Grange and a great asset to you. The elected leaders must be brought into your leadership team circle and you must help them to succeed.

If the leadership team doesn’t work together for the good of the group, the group can not be successful. It doesn’t matter how large the team is to start, only how well they work together.

After you have evaluated and written down your skills and needs, you must begin working to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. All successful leaders must always strive to improve themselves. The future of your Grange depends upon you.