

How Do You Want People to See You as a Leader?

By Jim Rohn

... as honest and full of integrity, or dishonest and full of deceit? It's your choice.

For a leader, honesty and integrity are absolutely the keys to success.

A lot of people don't realize how closely they're being watched by others. But do you remember when you were a kid in grade school, how you used to sit there staring at your teacher all day? By the end of the school year, you could do a perfect imitation of her mannerisms. You were aware of the slightest nuances in her voice—all the little clues that distinguished levels of meaning and told you the difference between bluff and "I mean business."

As a child, you were able to do this after eight or nine months of observation. Suppose you had five or 10 years—do you think there would've been anything about your teacher you *didn't* know?

Now fast forward and use that analogy as a manager. How much does your team know about you right this minute? Have you been completely honest with them, or do you feel like you've gotten away with small dishonest things?

An act of dishonesty can't be hidden, and it will instantly undermine the authority of a leader. However, an act of integrity and kindness is just as obvious. When you're in a leadership position, you have the choice of how you will be seen—but you *will* be seen, one way or the other.

In any organization, people want to believe in their leaders. If you give them reason to trust you, they're not going to go looking for reasons to think otherwise, and they'll be just as perceptive about your positive qualities as they are about the negative ones.

Yet we all know people who have gotten ahead as a result of dishonest or unethical behavior. But like the old saying goes, "*Hope of dishonest gain is the beginning of loss.*" I don't think it's referring to loss of money. I think it actually means loss of self-respect. You can have all the material things in the world, but if you've lost respect for yourself, what do you really have? The only way to ever attain success and enjoy it is to achieve it honestly with pride in what you've done.