

What kind of leadership is good for the Korean-Canadian community?

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Everybody can be a leader. In the Korean-Canadian community, leaders must have a position or a title, projecting themselves to be a person in command who demands respect and is highly honoured. For example, he or she must not only be a person who is a politician, but also one who speaks loudly, and who can control and manage others with attraction and charisma. Not being able to meet their followers' needs and standards would disqualify them from leadership. However, no one discusses whether there should be a true leader for the Korean-Canadian community and Canadian society-at-large. Even though people want to obtain group and individual leadership, they do not always take the matter seriously. I hope that community leaders would seek education or training to better serve the needs of the Korean-Canadian community for not only first-generation immigrants, but also not only future generations such as second- and third-generation Korean-Canadians.

Leadership as well as innate temperament, but interest in learning, and constant education, training and experience are also needed. We need an opportunity and place where people can learn and experience appropriate leadership skills. The experience and the field of education should be diversified. Social service organizations offer a good venue to perform important influence and practices. Nowadays, with rapidly changing times, Korean Canadian community needs appropriate volunteer leadership skills. It is not the same as it was in monarchical times, which required authoritative leadership.

Authoritative leadership is needed in accordance with the situation, but incorporates teamwork and does not depend on one person. It is the gathering of people who can work and collaborate together. A partnership of teamwork is the most desirable model, with everyone being responsible for everything from planning, implementing, evaluating to achieving objectives, outcomes and results from inception to completion.

This is because the group as a whole has a common interest and needs to spread out various activities, programs, and projects while sharing different creative ideas and opinions. In doing so independently, they can communicate better by not conflicting with one another but by working together. Leaders are not people who live for their own desires or interests, but for the overall objective and the good of the larger group. They must accept and work within the context of their own weaknesses and failings, and present a life of stability in order to deal with the changing times.

Leaders must not only fulfill their responsibilities and accountabilities to their own lives, but must also be open-minded and know their own self-discovery, health status, values, personality and lifestyle. Wise judgments and rapid decision-making are also important priorities. The judging standard that everyone has, the morality and the ethics that are appropriate to each value system are different according to the age and depending on the situation. Leaders have a unique conviction that can only be carried out by themselves. Leadership has a standard of judgment and values that must stand firm and not be shaken because others have different perspectives.

In other words, I decide what is most important to me today. It is a choice. The order of priority, choice, and time of decision are the only things that differ. The most important thing for the leader is not to neglect the individual for the world, but to demonstrate to each individual leader, family, society, nation, and the world the path to a living a meaningful and worthy life.

Good leadership is a key for the Korean-Canadian community because it promotes teamwork; utilizes a good model for planning and organizing events; fosters leadership in others; knows how to assess community problems and challenges; builds healthy communities, treats other with dignity and respect; and empowers others at the same time as the leader grows and heals as a person.