

# STUDENT LEADER



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[www.studentlinc.net](http://www.studentlinc.net)

35 WAYS  
TO PUT THE  
**LEADER**  
IN  
STUDENT  
LEADER



## THE LIST

Here's all 35 ways that are explained in this ebook.

Print the list out and put it somewhere you can see it and use it...DAILY.

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1. Find your zone and zone in.
2. Listen - "Can you hear me now?"
3. Do few things really well.
4. You're dead if you miss deadlines.
5. Make sure people are "in the know."
6. Think about your thinking.
7. Prepare like you're going to perform.
8. Keep learning.
9. Make people feel special in the first minute you talk to them.
10. End conflict quickly.
11. Give credit to others.
12. Help someone else be successful. Help someone win.
13. Solve a problem no one wants to solve.
14. Mentor someone else.
15. Keep your promises.
16. Set your personal expectations higher.
17. Possess a positive, abundance mentality.
18. Get involved in making the world a better place.
19. Be present.
20. Keep short accounts.
21. See situations from a variety of perspectives.
22. Laugh.
23. Handwritten Thank You Notes.
24. Be a storyteller.
25. Do a little extra.
26. Find the best in other people.
27. Admit your mistakes and learn from them.
28. Help people feel the ABC's: Acceptance, Belong, & Cared for.
29. Leave the position better than you found it.
30. Show respect to adults, mentors, advisors, administrators, and teachers.
31. Keep your cool. Be consistent.
32. Leave well.
33. Be a team player. Create high team morale.
34. Make your people feel more important than your projects.
35. Raise up potential leaders. Reproduce yourself.

### Some student leaders do better than others.

There are a lot of ways to describe an outstanding student leader. But there's one particular way that always catches my attention. It's when a person introduces a student by actually calling him or her a leader.

A student may be in a student leadership position, but that doesn't mean she's a leader. People recognize you as a student leaders when you are the person who is known as:

- \* The GO-TO student in a situation.
- \* The GET-IT-DONE student.
- \* The student who does everything with EXCELLENCE.
- \* The student who gets AMAZING results.
- \* The student who inspires POSITIVE thoughts and actions in others.

Do you know a student leader like this?

Are you a student leader like this?

## I guess the question is: If you're going to be a student leader, don't you want to be a GREAT one?

It's easy to become just another student leader who goes through the motions and does what's required. But every once in awhile a student leader shows up who rises above the rest. A student leader with characteristics and capabilities that truly define great leadership.

I guess the question is:

**If you're going to be a student leader, don't you want to be a GREAT one?**

This brief ebook is a simple way for me to share some ideas and practical ways that student leaders can distance themselves from the mundane, mediocre, ordinary, standard, run-of-the-mill students who miss out on the opportunities for greatness available to everyone.

The list starts on the next page. But before you dive into my list, think about what you might put on your own list first.

#### Questions To Ask Yourself

1. How would you define a great student leader?
2. What kind of plan do you have in place to continually develop and grow as a student leader?
3. What is one thing that you could be doing that would set you apart from other student leaders?
4. When people describe you and your student leadership abilities, what adjectives do you think they use?
5. Do you want to be a GREAT student leader?

#### Write Your Answers Here

## **.01 FIND YOUR ZONE AND ZONE IN.**

People recognized something special and unique in you when you were elected or selected for your student leadership position. You have a "gift." Now it's time to work with that gift and use it for the benefit of others. You have strengths and talents that are wonderfully yours. Don't worry about those things that you're not good at. Find someone else to help you do those things. You need to be intentionally adding value to your organization and others through those capabilities that you excel at. Your "zone" are those moments when you moving forward in the area of your strengths. You can feel when you're in the zone. It's energizing. You enjoy your work. People will think you're better than you actually are. Focus on your zone and it will make others turn their head and say, "WOW!"

## **.02 LISTEN - "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?"**

The greatest communication skill of a leader is the ability to listen. You already know what *you* think, how *you* feel, what *your* own opinion is. Now it's time to tap into the perspective of someone else. When you listen well, people think you're more intelligent, more caring, more knowledgeable, and more friendly. One of the greatest needs that people have is the need to be listened too. It calms conflicts, it reduces tension, it helps people heal, and it makes someone feel like they're significant.

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## **.03 DO FEW THINGS REALLY WELL.**

Which is better: to accomplish eight things that people would consider a "3" on a scale of 1-10; or accomplish three things that people would consider an "8"? People are impressed by excellence.

Mediocrity is so average that others don't even recognize it. A great illustration of this is juggling. I can juggle three balls pretty well. People watch me juggle three balls and they think, "Wow, he's a good juggler." But the moment you throw that fourth ball into the mix, there are balls all over the floor. Over and over, I drop the balls. When people see this they think, "Man...we need to find ourselves a new juggler." It's your call. You can say "yes" to a lot of things or just a few things. But the more you carry, the more you dilute your chances of being excellent.

#### **.04 YOU'RE DEAD IF YOU MISS DEADLINES.**

When you, as a student leader, agree to a deadline, you are making a promise. When you miss your deadline, you aren't keeping your promise. Deadlines are typically necessary because other people are relying on the work you are doing. Deadlines are expectations that work will be done. If you want to impress people, get your work done before a stated deadline. The time to negotiate a deadline is when you're creating or accepting it. Try this: Push a deadline out a bit further and then turn your stuff in early. People will think you're amazing, organized, disciplined, dependable, and a valued member of the team.

If you want to impress people, get your work done before a stated deadline.

#### **.05 MAKE SURE PEOPLE ARE "IN THE KNOW."**

For most people, the ability to predict the future with 100% accuracy is only a wish that will never come true. Life has a way of happening. Circumstances mess up the best strategies and plans. When you find yourself with an unforeseen obstacle, let somebody know. If you're going to be a little late - tell someone. If you've got a problem, be honest about it. When your list of "If's" starts

growing...make sure you're communicating. The worst thing that a student leader can do is to withdraw, thinking that she can handle everything on her own. When people are kept in the loop, then they're not surprised.

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People like surprises for birthdays and holidays. But they don't like surprises when all of a sudden you've blindsided them with your inability to meet expectations or commitments. The rule of thumb is: as soon as you know let someone else know.

### **.06 THINK ABOUT YOUR THINKING.**

You might be saying, "I think all the time." But that's not the kind of thinking I mean here. I'm encouraging you to reflect, meditate, evaluate, and learn from your thinking. One of the roles of a student leader is to solve problems. But it's not easy to solve problems if you don't take the time to think about the problems. Thinking allows you to view things from a variety of perspectives. It helps you to consider multiple options. It actually makes you smarter. Don't think (ha!) for a minute that your first impression, your first response will always be your best response. Sometimes, those student leaders who fly by the seat of their pants find that they have to kick themselves in that same seat because they didn't take time to think. Build thinking time into your schedule. When people ask you a serious question, tell them that you need time to think about your response before giving it. They'll appreciate the effort you're putting in to give them a significant answer.

## **.07 PREPARE LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO PERFORM.**

Preparation is vital to a quality performance. When people see an athlete perform at a high level, they applaud, cheer, and hold the athlete in high regard. What they typically don't see is the time and energy the athlete spent in preparation for his performance. The excellence displayed on the field or on the court is the result of training and practicing with excellence in mind. A student leader can't expect to merely show up and perform at a high level. If a student leader wants to deliver an excellent speech, then he must prepare for that. If a student leader wants to oversee an excellent meeting, then she must prepare for that. If a student leader wants others to buy into the guiding values of the team or organization, then there must be time spent in preparation. A quote by Benjamin Franklin is appropriate here - "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

## **.08 KEEP LEARNING.**

I'll let you in on a little secret: People aren't impressed with know-it-alls. They do like to follow leaders who are growing, developing, and learning on a consistent basis. If you continually make the same mistakes over and over, you aren't learning. When people understand that you are making a serious attempt to learn something, they'll appreciate your effort and your humility. Leaders are learners. Stop learning and you stop leading.

People may not remember everything you said, but they will remember how you made them feel.

## **.09 MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL IN THE FIRST MINUTE YOU TALK TO THEM.**

It could be a compliment. It might be a question about something that is going on in their life. It is anything that lets someone else know that you consider them to be important and significant. You



have the ability to encourage or discourage in the first 60 seconds of your conversation. You have a chance to create something memorable or ordinary. People may not remember everything you said, but they will remember how you made them feel.

### **.10 END CONFLICT QUICKLY.**

As a student leader, you only have a year in your position. You don't have time to carry emotional baggage around and avoid people because of tension from conflict. If something comes up between you and someone else, get it taken care of and move on. Letting things fester or go unresolved only makes matters worse. It will tend to spread to others as they begin to take sides and form camps around the conflict. Conflict doesn't tend to go away on it's own. Be the leader and be intentional in resolving issues as quickly as possible.

### **.11 GIVE CREDIT TO OTHERS.**

Since you're in a student leadership position, people may naturally want to praise you when something goes well. One of the best ways to motivate others is to deflect the praise you receive on to the people you lead. Don't hog the spotlight. Pass the credit on to those who helped make things happen. Your followers will appreciate the attention and be more motivated to work with excellence on the next project that comes along.

## Don't hog the spotlight.

As the leader, you don't "need" the credit, you "need" your people to be the best they can be. You'll be amazed how much more they'll respect your leadership when you focus on them during those moments when you might have the right to focus on yourself.

## **.12 HELP SOMEONE ELSE BE SUCCESSFUL. HELP SOMEONE WIN.**

Everyone wants to be the best they can be. But it's difficult to do it on our own. As a student leader, your greatest success will come when your people are successful. Your followers define your leadership. If you help someone else on your team do well - then you do well. Your stock as a leader goes up when you help those around you to be better than they would be without you around. Think about this: If they're not better with you around, then why would they want you around?

## **.13 SOLVE A PROBLEM NO ONE WANTS TO SOLVE.**

Leaders are by nature problem solvers. If there's a problem that no one wants to tackle and you take it on and solve it - you are now irreplaceable. Everyday, people sign up for the easy tasks and the simple jobs. But it's the student leader who stands up to the challenge that no one else wants that learns, grows, and has the opportunity to move ahead of the pack.

## **.14 MENTOR SOMEONE ELSE.**

When you mentor someone, you pour your life and learning into them. You might be tempted to only get involved in those things that draw the attention or recognition of a lot of people. But those things don't offer the depth of relationship that a mentoring relationship does. Do you realize that everything you know, you learned from someone else? Mentors have the opportunity to make life-changing differences in those whom they invest in. Choose one or two people that you can pour your life into and you'll find that you learn and grow as much as they do in the process.

## **.15 KEEP YOUR PROMISES.**

One of the easiest things to do as a student leader is to make a promise. People are wary of a campaign promise because it never moves past the "making" phase. Keep your word. If you make a promise, then do the hard work to manage and follow through on that promise. One of the best ways to prove to people that they can trust you is to be trustworthy. At the core of trustworthiness is

the ability to do what you've promised to do. If you don't think you can keep a promise, don't make it in the first place.

## **.16 SET YOUR PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS HIGHER.**

You'll quickly notice that everyone has certain expectations for you as a student leader. Expectations will come from people like your advisor, your team, your peers, your teachers, your coaches, your parents. Everyone has some idea of what you're capable of and how much you will accomplish (and how much you should accomplish for them). So here's the trick to getting around that: Don't worry about everyone else's expectations of you -- just set your personal expectations higher than everyone else's. That way, you won't have to worry about being labeled as mediocre, or average, or unreliable. You'll blow people away because you've set your own standard...and you set it higher.

**Don't worry about everyone else's expectations of you -- just set your personal expectations higher than everyone else's.**

## **.17 POSSESS A POSITIVE, ABUNDANCE MENTALITY.**

You are constantly going to bump into people who feel like there is never enough time, never enough resources, never enough capability present in the room. And since they feel that way, they are going to scramble to make sure they get what's theirs before everyone else does. But if you want to be a student leader who stands above the fray, keep your attitude positive and work from a sense of abundance. Be generous and optimistic. Don't try to guard your territory or keep everything you know a secret. Share your resources and help others succeed.

## **.18 GET INVOLVED IN MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.**

Ultimately, you were given gifts, strengths, talents, abilities, smarts, skills...you get the idea...not to make yourself better - but so you can be actively engaged in bettering the world. The best student leaders find ways to get involved in their community, fight for social justice, and right the wrongs caused by poverty and inequality. And those experiences are then incorporated into the fabric of your leadership. And you know what they give you? Perspective. Compassion. Heart. People like to see that in their leaders.

## **.19 BE PRESENT.**

When other students are talking to you, look them in the eye and listen. When you're in a meeting, don't keep checking your email. Work hard at being as fully present wherever you are at. Notice what's going on around you. The world is full of people whose bodies are in the room but their mind is somewhere else. Take the headphones out of your ears when you walk across campus - they make you appear unapproachable. Make people feel like they are the center of your attention when you are with them. The best way to do that is to make them the center of your attention when you are with them.

## **.20 KEEP SHORT ACCOUNTS.**

What I'm suggesting here is that you travel as lightly as possible. This means that you don't carry around the baggage of grudges, hard feelings, unresolved conflict, misunderstandings, anger, bitterness, and all of the stuff like that. It will eat you up inside. Do you want to be as effective as possible? Then learn to forgive people. When you forgive someone, it releases all of those things that I just listed that can tear away at your heart, mind, and soul. This means that there may be times that you need to forgive yourself as well. You have too much potential, too many great things you want to do to be carrying around that stuff with you. And when you forgive people, they'll be more willing to forgive you.

## **.21 SEE SITUATIONS FROM A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES.**

For all of the knowledge and wisdom and experience you have in you - yours is only ONE perspective. Two people can see the same thing and come away with two different stories. That's because you don't see the world as it is - you see the world as YOU are. When you need to make a decision seek out other people's perspectives.

# You don't see the world as it is - you see the world as YOU are.

Change the way you are looking at something. You'll learn and your world will expand and you'll increase the odds of making a good decision. Don't surround yourself with people who think like you...you already know how you think. Find people that can offer you a whole new way of looking at the world. And your world will get a whole lot bigger.

## **.22 LAUGH.**

Why so serious? People enjoy being around someone who has a good sense of humor. It doesn't mean that you have to be a comedian. But it won't hurt you to laugh a little...or laugh a lot. In fact, the student leaders who can learn to laugh at their own mistakes and shortcomings are much more approachable and pleasant to be around. If you don't smile, people will think you're always mad or unfriendly. Did you know that laughing makes you healthier?

## **.23 HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU NOTES.**

This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to put the "leader" in student leader. Listen people, this works! When you notice someone doing something right - take a moment and jot them a HANDWRITTEN note. Not an email, not a typewritten letter, a quick note in your own scribbles. It is

a gesture that has a HUGE impact on the person receiving it. I've seen notes that I've written posted on people's bulletin boards. They save these things. In this day and age, a handwritten thank you is so rare. People are amazed that you would take the extra time to actually write out your thank you. Write five of these a week and you'll outdistance yourself from everyone else.

## **.24 BE A STORYTELLER.**

People have short attention spans...UNLESS...you are telling a good story. Don't believe me? Just go to your local movie theatre and watch all those young people with their bottoms plastered to a seat for two hours. That's because we all like to listen, engage, and think about a good story. If you want to get people's attention, tell a good story. If you want to make a point, tell a story that helps illustrate that point. Story is one of the most powerful communication tools we have at our disposal. So don't just tell 'em, let the story tell 'em. They'll remember your story a lot longer.

## **.25 DO A LITTLE EXTRA.**

The path from ordinary to extraordinary is paved with little things. It doesn't take much to be the best. Look at some of the more popular sports in the Olympics. The difference between first and second place is often in the hundredth of seconds. But there is much more opportunity available to the one who takes home the GOLD. When you do something for someone else, find that little extra that you can add. Surprise people by doing a little more than is expected. If you think you're too busy, then maybe you should do less so you can do a little extra.

**Catch people doing something right and acknowledge it.**

## **.26 FIND THE BEST IN OTHER PEOPLE.**

People already know the worst about themselves. What we need is people who will come alongside others and help them realize their fullest potential. When you believe in people, it helps them to be their best. Even when you offer feedback to someone else that focuses on an area of improvement, you can still sandwich it in between some positive feedback. Catch people doing something right and acknowledge it.

## **.27 ADMIT YOUR MISTAKES AND LEARN FROM THEM.**

Your fellow students already know when you make a mistake. You only compound the negative impact of your mistake by trying to sweep it under the rug. When you come clean about it, you are able to move on more quickly. If you hide it, you carry it around with you and people begin to question your integrity. When you admit your mistakes, you help people see that you are more real. And when you are honest with yourself, you can learn the important lessons that come with the mistakes you make.

## **.28 HELP PEOPLE FEEL THE ABC'S: ACCEPTANCE, BELONGING, & CARED FOR.**

Everyone wants to find their place in this world. If you, as a student leader, can be the person to instill the warm feelings and confidence that acceptance, belonging, and caring brings - you'll gain both their trust and loyalty. You can do this by providing a place for them to serve, by communicating their value to your team or organization, and by letting them know of their importance as a person. Don't simply focus on what they do, but who they are.

## **.29 LEAVE THE POSITION BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT.**

As you serve in your position, you will make things easier or harder for the person who follows you in this position. If you take the time to create a new filing system to store old records, or develop a

better relationship with another part of your organization, or keep track of all the phone numbers you needed throughout the year - that will be something the next person DOESN'T have to do. Look at it this way, if there's anything that is easy to do in your position at this point, it is probably because someone before you paid the price of hard work so you wouldn't have to. If you do this, next year's student leader will look back on your time with gratitude and good feelings.

If there's anything that is easy to do in your position...it is probably because someone before you paid the price of hard work so you wouldn't have to.

### **.30 SHOW RESPECT TO ADULTS, MENTORS, ADVISORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND TEACHERS.**

You are in your position for one year. But the adults that you work with probably stay in their same position year in and year out. They've seen a lot of student leaders come and go. One of the ways that you can distinguish yourself above the others is by being respectful. This doesn't mean you have to agree with everything. But you understand that this is these people's JOBS. More often they are in this position because they want to invest in the lives of students. They probably have a lot of experience. Don't be frustrated by their cynicism of your new idea. They've seen it before in one form or another. Listen to their hesitancy and show them why your version will work. If you come at it with an "us against them" mindset, you'll only make it difficult on yourself.



### **.31 KEEP YOUR COOL. BE CONSISTENT.**

There will be a lot of things that you can get mad about during your student leader year. But responding in anger usually makes a situation more difficult. If you can stay calm and keep a level head in those tense moments, you'll be better equipped to RESPOND to the situation rather than REACT. When you burst out in anger, you take away any chance of getting a response out of the other people involved. If people know that you will be consistent in your emotions through a variety of circumstances (both good and bad), they will be more willing to hear what you have to say and respect your leadership. If you take them on an emotional rollercoaster ride every day, they'll always be looking for the quickest exit.

### **.32 LEAVE WELL.**

Every student leader leaves. Every student leadership year comes to an end. The question is how will you leave (and when)? When you leave well, you finish what you've started. You have done your best. You walk away with no regrets. When you leave well, people want to celebrate what you've done.

### **.33 BE A TEAM PLAYER. CREATE HIGH TEAM MORALE.**

If you've read most of the 35 ideas I've listed for you, then you know that ONE is too small a number for greatness. What I mean is - you can't do anything significant by yourself. We need other people and other people need us. Your team depends on you and you must depend on your team. Allow your people to do what they need to do. Trust is the glue that holds any team together. Are you doing whatever it takes to make the members of your team better? Your team will be much more effective if they enjoy being a team. Morale is a great motivator. When success comes, point to your team. When failure happens, take it upon yourself to do better.

### **.34 MAKE YOUR PEOPLE FEEL MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR PROJECTS.**

When you step into a student leadership position there will be certain tasks that you are required to do. If you do all of those tasks yourself, you will be doing the work of a student worker. If you get other people involved you will be moving in the direction of becoming a student leader. As a student leader, help your people feel special. They won't be as motivated by the idea of helping you get your work done.

If you get other people involved you will be moving in the direction of becoming a student leader.

People are more important than tasks. Develop a relationship with them and show them how they are valued for more than just the work they do.

### **.35 RAISE UP POTENTIAL LEADERS. REPRODUCE YOURSELF.**

Do you want to create a legacy of positive leadership that will live on after you've gone? Then invest in others who have the capacity and potential to step into your position when you leave. Take the time to mentor someone. Take what you've learned from your experience and pass it on to someone else. Share your resources. Tell someone that you believe in them and can see their potential. Give them opportunities to lead under your direction and nurturing.



## HERE'S THE SECRET

When you finish a GREAT student leadership year, you'll quickly realize that you couldn't have accomplished it ALL BY YOURSELF. You needed help. You needed other people. And what is true for you is true for those around you. They need someone, somebody, anybody - to come alongside them and help them reach their potential.

Each of these 35 ideas are provided as a way for you to BE THE PERSON who helps someone else have a GREAT year. When you do that, you increase your influence and impact on that person. That way, when they consider what kind of student leader you are, they'll say you're a LEADER because of how much you helped them, encouraged them, served them, and made them better.

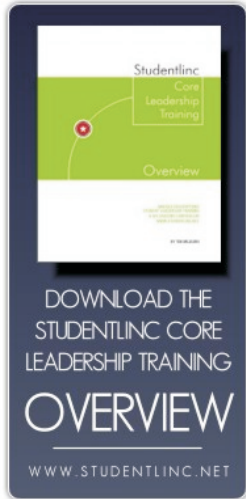
# Think about it...If you are going to be a student leader, don't you want be a GREAT one?

### Questions To Ask Yourself

1. What three ideas stood out to you the most?
2. What is an immediate "action" step you can implement today with each one of those?
3. How can you begin to teach some of these ideas to the people whom you lead?

### Write Your Answers Here

# info



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Milburn is a student leadership advisor, speaker, and author. His mission is to develop lifelong leaders one student at a time. He is the founder of studentlinc - an organization that creates practical tools, resources, and ideas that benefit student leaders and those who work with them. Learn more at [www.studentlinc.net](http://www.studentlinc.net).

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## BORN ON DATE

This document was created on December 8, 2008 and is based on the best information at that time. Check [here](#) for updates.



## ABOUT STUDENTLINC

[Studentlinc](#) was created to specifically address the issues and the circumstances faced by student leaders - those young people who are engaged in the leadership laboratory within their school, youth group, civic organization, etc.

The website is dedicated to taking the best of what's available in leadership literature and training and offer it within the context of the student leadership experience.

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