

# Leadership by Nurture Not Nature

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**S**ome people are told from a very young age that they are natural leaders. This title is disproportionately applied to men over women. However, nature does not delegate the role; instead finding and embracing your preferred leadership style is the key. With the New Year upon us, now is the perfect time to explore new techniques and nurture your inner leader. As we all know, practice makes...better!

AWIS offers a number of webinars that focus on leadership topics — access for AWIS members can be obtained by going to [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org)

## **Appreciate diversity.**

Recognize and appreciate that individuals are different and thus require and expect different treatment.

## **Empower others.**

Individuals are the best judges of their own strengths. Empower people by asking your team members how they can contribute instead of dictating tasks.

## **Lead from the front.**

Be an energetic, enthusiastic, and committed role model to motivate your group members to have the same positive attitude.

## **Strike a pose.**

Communication researchers estimate that 75% of meaning comes from non-verbal cues. For example, turning your entire torso instead of only your head toward someone who is addressing you indicates openness and interest.



**Be flexible.**

Openly offer “flex-time” or “flex-place.” Having this option can benefit working women, especially those without children which tend to be viewed negatively by employers when having to ask for such benefits.

**Promote self-evaluation.**

Ask individual team members questions such as “How do you think the project is going?” Then listen. This allows the person to critique her/himself and divulge any problems, fostering a more constructive conversation.

**Eliminate face-time.**

Some people have difficulty with face-to-face interactions. Written or electronic dialogues may be helpful alternatives for communicating most effectively with them.

**Allow autonomy.**

People develop intrinsic motivation when they can be self-directed. Furthermore, generating novel insights or ideas enables people to feel ownership of and more commitment toward the company or group objective.

**Observe, then act.**

If you sense an issue or tension developing between co-workers, investigate early. Listen to both sides and mediate open, constructive communication.

**Listen to the quiet voices.**

Introverts or shy individuals may be hesitant to speak up in group settings. Meet with these people before meetings to hear their perspectives and ideas. Since they have had time to think about the topic and their feelings, they may be more willing to contribute at the meeting.