

What Makes a Leader? Learning from Admiral Nimitz

Self Reflection

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz led the U.S. Pacific Fleet through some of the toughest battles of World War II by staying calm under pressure, making smart decisions, and caring about the people he served with. Real leadership isn't about being in charge—it's about how you show up when things get hard. It's about the choices you make, how you treat others, and how you bounce back when things go wrong.

Take a look at some of the leadership traits that helped Nimitz guide his team through a global war. Then, think about your own life:

Leadership Trait	Have I demonstrated this? (Yes/No/Maybe)	Example from My Life or Goals for Growth
Strategic Vision – Understood long-term strategy; made bold, calculated decisions.		
Decisiveness – Made critical choices under pressure, such as during Midway.		
Calm Under Pressure – Stayed composed during crises, inspiring confidence.		
Adaptability – Embraced new tactics and technology like carrier warfare.		
Delegation & Trust – Empowered others to lead and adapt quickly.		
Humility & Approachability – Fostered loyalty by remaining grounded and accessible.		

Ethical Leadership – Led with integrity and respect, building coalitions.		
Resilience & Patience – Stayed focused on steady, strategic progress.		
Effective Communication – Clearly shared plans and ensured coordination.		
Inspiration & Morale Building – Kept teams motivated through recognition and clarity.		
Resourcefulness – Made the most of limited resources, used intelligence well.		
Determination – Pushed through adversity to achieve victory.		

Reflection Prompt:

Now that you’ve learned about these leadership traits, think about how they show up in your own life. This is your chance to build self-awareness, set personal growth goals, and reflect on how your choices affect the people around you.

Pick one leadership trait you believe is your strongest.

- Why do you think this is your strength?
- Share a specific moment when you demonstrated it.

Then pick one trait you’d like to improve.

- What’s one step you could take to grow in this area?
- How might that help you become a stronger leader?