What defines a leader? Is it their own physical abilities? Or the movement the leader is trying to propel? Either or, Anthony Robbins, a motivational speaker, is a shining example of both. He was not born in the most fortunate situations, however, he made the best of it. Now Robbins has not made the impact that individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Ghandi, nevertheless, he has still made incredible strides to better society. Robbins is the modern leader that our society needs.

Robbins was born on February 29, 1960 in North Hollywood, California. His birth name is Anthony Mohorovic, and he was the eldest of three children. When Robbins was seven, his parents divorced, and his father subsequently left his family entirely because he could no longer support them. After the divorce, Robbins’s mother went through a slew of husbands, one being Jim Robbins, a former semi professional baseball player, who legally adopts Tony. Later, Robbins’s mother started abusing alcohol, which led to a difficult home life for Tony, which ended with his mother chasing him out of the house with a knife. Robbins never returned after that incident.

Robbins has been a leader since an early age, for instance, he was nominated as his high school class president. However, because he left his home at the age of 17, he never graduated high school nor attended college. However, lack of education did not prevent Robbins from
achieving. Robbins started his career with Jim Rohn, a motivational speaker (talk about real-life foreshadowing), by promoting his seminars. After Robbins’s stint with Rohn, he began his own self-coaching classes, despite having no background in psychology. Between 1983 to 1990, Robbins did a series of activities that later influence his seminars. Some of these activities include firewalking, skydiving, and board breaking. Other than his seminars, Robbins influenced the lives of others through his books. Tony wrote over ten books, and his three best selling are *Unlimited Power*, *Awaken the Giant Within*, and *Money: Master the Game*. In 1991, Robbins founded the Anthony Robbins foundation. The foundation is a non-profit organization created to empower individuals and organizations to make a significant difference in the quality of life of people often forgotten – youth, homeless and hungry, prisoners, elderly and disabled. Our international coalition of caring volunteers provides the vision, inspiration, finest resources, and the specific strategies needed to empower these important members of our society. Dedicated to creating positive change in the lives of people who simply need a boost envisioning a happier and deeply satisfying way of life, the Anthony Robbins Foundation supports several outreach programs wholeheartedly. Whether through a donation of time, talent, resources or monetary support, there are countless ways your generosity and the Anthony Robbins Foundation can make a difference.

The organization “has products and programs in more than 2,000 schools, 700 prisons, and 100,000 health and human service organizations.” Robbins has already impacted the lives of millions through his work (seminars, books, foundation, etc.) and he is only fifty-six years old.
If Robbins took the StrengthQuests test, his top five attributes would be maximizer, achiever, adaptability, developer, and positivity. According to Gallup StrengthQuest report, individuals in the maximizer theme “focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.” Robbins’s whole seminars and motivational videos are all about empowering others to achieve. He thrives on maximizing the potentials of those around him. He is also an achiever. “People especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive”. Robbins is by no means a slacker. He left his home at the age of 17 to achieve his goals, because he knew if he stayed, nothing would have gotten better for him. He pushed through all of his hardships in order to get to where he is today. He is also an adaptive person. “People especially talented in the Adaptability theme prefer to “go with the flow.” They tend to be “now” people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.” Robbins said “how am I going to live today to create the tomorrow I am committed to”. He is a firm believer that change starts now. If an individual wants to see change in the future, Robbins will tell them that change begins the second the individual starts it. Robbins is also a developer because of his ability to develop the potential he sees in others. “People especially talented in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.” His entire movement is based around this idea of bringing out the potential in others. There is a reason he is the seventh most viewed TED Talk, it is because those who following his teachings see success. Finally, Robbins is a positive being. “People especially talented in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can
get others excited about what they are going to do.” If he was not positive, his seminars would fall flat, thus leading his movement to flop. However, Robbins is a contagious person, those who listen to him usually want to follow him and what he is teaching.

Tony Robbins has plenty of values that make him a leader. Firstly, he is perseverant. He never quit, even when he hit rock bottom. He was disowned from his family, which in itself does immense damage, then he had to live on his own at the age of seventeen. Then he had to find a sustainable income without having a college degree in his later life. He has made it to where he is today with a little bit of luck and a whole lot of perseverance. Another key quality Robbins has is that he is simply a likable person. Watch any of his seminars/interviews and more likely than not, he comes off as a genuine person, which definitely helps when starting a movement. Robbins also fits the ethical leadership. He is both a moral person and a moral manager. According to an article written by Linda Klebe Trevino, Laura Pincus Hartman, and Michael Brown,

The "moral person" pillar of ethical leadership represents the substance of ethical leadership and it is an important prerequisite to developing a reputation for ethical leadership because leaders become associated with their traits, behaviors, and decisions as long as others know about them. With the moral person pillar in place, you should have a reputation for being an ethical person.

If Robbins was not a moral person, then he would be seen as a hypocritical leader, however, he treats everyone fairly and justly no matter the circumstances. Robbins exemplifies a moral manager through his work when he interacts with others around him. He influences others to do
positive things. If he lacked in the moral manager department, his communication would suffer resulting in poor seminars and teachings.

There is a lot that can be taken away from Tony Robbins just by simply observing his teaching methods. However, the most important take-away is his ability to communicate clearly and positively, yet firmly. He has done amazing work simply by talking. If you can have that big of an influence on others around you, just by using your voice, then you are a born leader. That would be something I would like to incorporate into my leadership style. I want to be able to communicate better and have a larger impact with my voice.

My original definition of a leader was someone who is able to start a movement, gather followers, and see to it that either the movement finishes. While I still agree with this definition, I think it still needs a little more fine tuning. A leader is someone who is able to start a movement, gather followers, and see to it that either the movement successfully finishes, or is able to continue on without the original leader. A leader should also be able to put the needs of the movement before the needs of the individual. Finally, the leader must know when it is time to step down and let others step up.

All in all, Robbins is a shining model of what our modern leader should be. He may be young, but he still has had an impact on millions through his leadership. He is always looking to prop others up instead of himself, which is a key quality for any leader. Tony Robbins has the ability to be remembered as one of the great leaders our society has had the pleasure of having.
Work Cited


