



## How to Know If Your Leadership Is Helping Or Hurting?

In my work as a leadership coach, I see lots of leaders who are constantly in fixing mode—any time there's a problem they jump in to take care of it. Their only thought is to help. But I always ask them, "Are you helping? Or are you unintentionally hurting the people you lead?"

Here are some ways you may be doing harm as you're trying to help:

**You don't give your employees a chance to show what they're capable of.** Allow people to show you why they were hired and how much they can do. One of your most important abilities as a leader is to let people shine.

**You tell people what to do instead of letting them show you what they can do.** Telling people what to do isn't leadership, it's direction. Leadership means creating a space for others to accomplish their best.

**You're constantly speaking and don't allow others to express their opinion.** Listening only to your own voice harms your credibility and disempowers your leadership. Power doesn't come to those who speak the most but to those who listen best.

**You provide solutions to problems other people should be solving.** You should not be the fixer of all problems. Period. Allow your people to develop solutions—their abilities will grow and they'll come up with things you might not have thought of.

**You complicate simple business processes.** Keep things as simple and uncomplicated as possible. People have enough to do without the bother of unnecessary bureaucracy and complicated processes.

**You act like an expert when you're not.** The best leaders never feel the need to come across as the smartest person in the room or to pretend they know everything. They listen to learn and they give others a chance to be impressive.

**You say things like "I know best."** Even if you know you're right, it's far more effective to guide people into the answer through dialogue and communication. People want to know they're contributing, not just following orders.

**You give rewards where there hasn't been effort.** In many companies where I coach, it's common practice to give bonuses regardless of the effort people put in. This approach only creates a culture of mediocrity.

**You play favorites with your team.** For any leader, fairness builds trust and trust is everything. Treat everyone with the same respect and be equitable in providing opportunities.

**You say you're going to do something but you don't.** Any time you don't keep your word, your leadership loses respect and credibility.

**You shame, criticize or blame others publicly in meetings.** As the saying goes, appreciate in public and criticize in private.

**You accept mediocrity.** In leadership as in other things, what you accept is what you get.

**Lead from within:** Most leaders have good intentions, but those intentions sometimes lead to bad results. Try to keep your eye on the consequences of everything you do as a leader and ask yourself whether it's helping or hurting.

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