



Take the lead: Growth starts with you

How often have you experienced leaders who try to get the most out of others -- helping to grow their skills, their capacity, and drawing them into being their best -- yet they fail to do that for themselves?

Once upon a time, I was that leader.

While I was always trying to get the most out of my team and to elevate their skills, all too often, it felt like I was demanding more and more from them and pointing the finger of blame in their direction. In reality, I should have been pointing the finger at myself.

I learned the hard way that, when facing a challenge, the first question a leader must ask is, "What part of the problem am I?"

First, lead yourself. From there, you can grow to lead others

Let me tell you a story about a client of mine.

After reviewing and reflecting on the results of his Team Leader View, the leader-only version of the Team Diagnostic Assessment, he noticed several gaps in his leadership skills. Most importantly, he noticed a large gap in trust.

He wanted to make a lasting change and control the impact he had on his team. So, he made a very public, very vulnerable statement at his next all-team meeting. He stood in front of the room and said, "Hi. My name is ... and I am a recovering control freak. I say recovering because I see the impact of my control issues and I'm committed to changing."

We designed a process by which he would meet with each of his direct reports on a quarterly cycle to ask them the following questions:

- What do you need from me as your leader?
- What's working? What's not working?
- What are you getting from me that you want more of? What do you want less of?
- What's missing?
- How can I make your job easier?

He conducted this assessment regularly with his team, and each time the feedback he received was more open, honest and candid. Why? Because each time he received feedback, he asked himself the question, "What part of the problem am I?"

He then made commitments to address the unique challenges and concerns his team brought to him, declared his commitments to his team and agreed to be measured against them.

It starts with you. Always

You are the only one who can change your life from the inside out. The key, however, is knowing when you're ready to change. There has to be enough dissonance between where you are and where you want to be before there is enough willingness to shake things up.

Only when the pain of the status quo finally outstrips the fear of the change will meaningful lasting change happen.

Getting real in 4 steps:

I'll warn you, looking in the mirror and understanding your role in challenges and difficulties is uncomfortable, but it's necessary. Part of the job is staying in the discomfort long enough so that you can hear what it's trying to tell you. Pay attention and listen to the signs; they are always there.

The opportunity is to choose to notice them.

Follow these four steps to identify your strengths and acknowledge your faults in order to show up as the best leader possible for your team.

1. Get honest feedback

In general, we, as people, are terrible at assessing how we truly show up. This is why tools can be so important for honest, impartial feedback.

2. Get a coach

Reviewing feedback without the intent and commitment to change is worthless. When you invest in a coach, you are investing in a regular cadence of accountability. You are investing in a change mindset and a structure to support it.

3. Get naked

Soberly assess the provided feedback. Does the impact wake you're creating match what you intended? Is your wake disrupting your team's ability to excel, or is it guiding them to exciting, uncharted territories?

4, Get changing

If you're receiving feedback but failing to act on it, you're missing the mark. Keep up that cadence of accountability, prove to your team that you're willing to address presented challenges and make the necessary shifts.

"If you want to grow your company, grow your people. If you want to grow your people, grow yourself" has become a popular leadership mantra, and it's a proven truth.

Leadership starts with you. Always.

When will you take the lead in your own development?

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