



People Leadership

Leadership is about people and it's only about people. No one can lead a company, they can only lead the people who make up the company. There are no "team leaders," there are only leaders who lead the people on the team.

Stuff, businesses, buildings and budgets need to be managed, people need to be led.

That's why interpersonal skills are so critical for effective leadership. If you cannot relate to the people you're leading then you won't be leading them for long. Effective leaders know that communication is vital when attempting to relate to others. That's why their efforts to improve their communication skills is never ending.

Many people occupy leadership positions but it seems these days as if fewer and fewer of them actually attempt to truly lead. They issue edicts and write policies without so much as a thought of how it may impact the people they supposedly lead.

Whether intentional or not the actions they take and the statements they make build barriers between them and the people they need to grow their organizations.

Effective Authentic Leaders don't merely occupy a leadership position, they actually lead. They build bridges between themselves and their people. They use their interpersonal skills to break through barriers. Once the barriers are down their excellent communication skills come into play. They seek first to understand the people they lead. They talk with them, not to them. They listen twice as much as they talk. They listen with more than their ears, they listen with their heart as well.

Edicts and policies attempt to force the compliance of people. Interpersonal skills combined with thoughtful communication build the willing commitment of people.

What amazes me most is how many people in leadership positions don't even like the people they should be leading. They often refer to them with words and phrases meant to "put them in their place." Poor leaders want the people who work for them to know that their "leader" is smarter than they will ever be. Poor leaders sentences are laced with I I I, as in I want, I will, I did this and on and on.

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Authentic Leaders not only like the people they lead, they care for them. Immensely. They refer to their people with words and phrases meant to build them up and help them see their full potential. Authentic Leaders want the people who work with them to believe they can accomplish anything, even one day surpassing the leader. Their sentences are full of words such as, we, ours, and us. You'll seldom hear an "I" come out of their mouth.

The next time you're speaking with your team record what you say. Then listen to it with a critical ear. If your message is short on "we" "ours" and "us" then your people may perceive you as a person in a leadership position who doesn't really lead...or care about them.

If that's the case you're costing your organization an opportunity to grow and you're limiting the potential of the people you could be leading. You might be fine with that but if you're not then you have work to do.

That work will begin with a decision to change your thinking. You can reap the many rewards of actually leading people or you can suffer the unending consequences of treating your people like things.

The choice, as always, is yours to make.

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