

CHAPTER 1

Leadership

In the entry for “leadership,” the thesaurus lists words such as: to control, command, rule, sway, dominate, supreme, power, and superiority. These words relate to an old leadership style where organizations had a more straightforward hierarchy and role authority was considered enough for a leader to motivate others. With many different generations in our workforce, the leadership styles of the past need to be transformed.

Those in a position of decision-making, should be basing their choices on facts, awareness, understanding, and carefully intended judgments versus random choices on a personal whim. Arbitrary leadership promotes deceptive environments that are often flooded with tendencies of faking, hiding, and lying. These leaders spend unproductive time and energy steering other people’s impressions of them so that only their favorable side is shown. They play politics to hide their deficiencies, uncertainties, and limitations.

The word leadership should be about the capability to adapt and spearhead any situation with integrity. At the same time, it should also be about the ability to create and clearly communicate a vision or a new direction by inspiring, empowering, developing, and motivating people to engage and to achieve more. Culture comes from within and it is up to the leadership to create the right environment. As leaders, we should have a thought pattern of helping people to be their natural best. Crafting and implementing a sustainable agenda that boosts energy, morale, and productivity will serve to encourage, expand, and strengthen returns.

The best-of-the-best in leadership have several character traits in common. They have a curious thirst for knowledge and capitalize on the opportunity to hydrate every day. No one is immune to tough luck or poor choices. The crème de la crème leaders learn early on to rely upon trusted advisors. These guiding partners build a bond over time by sharing unique and deep insights that will best support their clients. This closely linked and confidential relationship provides constructive counsel on sensitive matters, complex challenges, and major decisions. An external trusted advisor provides unique value. Many of the leader's problems, hopes, and fears cannot be deliberated with internal people because these matters must be kept close to the vest.

Over the past thirty years, I have interacted with many leaders. Those who were the most successful dealt with and overcame substantial adversity at some point in their lives. Growing stronger through intense situations enables powerful skills to emerge that will support leaders in all aspects of their future if leveraged appropriately. These transferable skills are the common denominator that most favorably impacts the best leaders to achieve extraordinary results. These leaders have the wherewithal to own their actions while still growing from any and all setbacks.

Great leaders also possess conceptual abilities, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that, when combined with their adaptive abilities, can predicate success. Possessing these core competencies denotes leaders in both our personal and professional lives. Highly adept leaders infuse themselves and those around them with positive energy and a clear vision, sparking the kind of enthusiasm that encourages and empowers favorable results. Those who can set the pace to innovate, organize, motivate, and influence others, create a beneficial ripple effect of future progress. This ambiance of camaraderie has a huge benefit for collaboration, motivating employees to strive for excellence. A leader's ethical fibers earn respect and instill positive energy to support the team in delivering the peak amount of quality work possible even during highly stressful situations.

In addition to an ethical mindset, emotional intelligence is a critical skill that all leaders need to develop if they desire to empower change and record sustainable achievements. Emotional intelligence is the

capacity to accurately recognize, interpret, and guide emotions within ourselves and others to expedite thinking. Emotional competencies have a significant impact on performance and attitude, allowing for ease of relationship building which impacts social cohesion. This mediating role inspires innovation and growth, while encouraging teams to leverage the unique strengths and contributions of each member.

Admirable leaders also possess a reputable character. Conduct is mainly determined by values and holds true for every area in our lives. The resolve to stay genuine, also referred to as being our authentic selves, is based upon what we believe to be the right direction even when nobody's watching. Those leaders who embrace the art of listening with compassion are in a much better position to be successful in our increasingly multigenerational workforce.

When employees say they want their voices to be heard, they are saying that they want leaders who will not just hear them, but who will actively and empathetically listen to them. Empathy is a powerful display of comprehension. Many of us avoid emotional interactions, especially in business. The best leaders know how to empathize and make themselves approachable to those who may need special consideration. Great leaders invest in activities that balance the head and the heart to create meaningful relationships. Employees aren't just tools and resources provided for the leader's success; they bring a wealth of unique capabilities and aptitudes. Leaders who care about their employees' well-being build performance, relationships, and influential currency. To improve meaningful relationships and organizational possibilities, leaders need to think longer and harder about employee satisfaction. People tend to work harder and aim to exceed expectations when they feel that they are genuinely cared about. Those leaders who remain authentic to their moral core principles naturally gain and retain more credibility.

The reality is that our workplaces are fluid and rapidly evolving. This shift in the workforce requires a new leadership style with unconventional ideas. In addition to creating and sustaining an agile workplace, the need for meaningful, collaborative work is very attractive to today's workforce. This approach increases profitability, performance, engagement, and retention of the employees and the customers. Those

who are new in our workforce won't stay with their employers for the length of time that prior generational workforces traditionally did. The future of the workplace will be markedly different because of the rapid rate of speed of technology, and the different needs, wants, and views of the upcoming generations.

Currently, I believe there is an erosion in our world's potential due to a significant lack of focus on leadership development specifically around inspiration, character, and culture. It is time to cultivate leadership in an intentional and thoughtful way for the betterment of the generations to come. As a society, we must escalate our efforts to establish an increased number of leadership teams who have been trained specifically to support the goals and objectives of today. This augmentation will create a vibrant pipeline of emerging leaders who will be better prepared for the unknowns of the future. Those who expand their "intellectual muscles" can show up by providing value and contribute a treasured blend that is especially beneficial in our ever-changing fast-paced world.



Nuggets of wisdom

Top 3 nuggets of wisdom from Chapter 1 | Leadership:

- 1** The common thread that cuts across all aspects of our world is leadership – we need to be intentional in leading our own lives, personally and professionally.
- 2** Our world is starving for leaders with more integrity.
- 3** There are specific character traits that distinguish effective leaders from “bad” leaders.