



INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business

Improve your results by becoming a likeable Boss

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PREFACE

While many who enter into management and leadership roles want to be genuinely liked by the workers they supervise, seeking popularity for its own sake can be a dead-end path. Many have tried to lead while seeking popularity only to find that, indeed, they are loved but not respected. Becoming a more likeable boss however does not mean you have to sacrifice respect. However, being a likeable boss and a respected boss does mean you have to learn to be more effective. This book helps you take the first steps on what will be a continuous journey towards becoming a more effective boss, the side effects of which are both likeability and respect.

*The speed of the leader is
the speed of the gang.*

MARY KAY ASH



IS IT BETTER TO BE LOVED OR FEARED?

This famous question comes down to us from Niccolo Machiavelli, a political theorist who lived in Italy during the Renaissance. He contended that a leader who is feared is preferable to a leader who is loved. However, he also lived during a time of great political instability where city governments changed in a flash, usually violently, and usually involving executions of the previous leadership. Since we no longer live in an age where stepping down from a leadership position or being removed would involve the loss of one's head, do we really need to adopt the route that proved so disastrous for such ruthless dictators as Saddam Hussein and Augusto Pinochet?

THE CASE FOR FEAR

An authoritarian approach to leadership is not all bad. Some people in leadership positions might still maintain that leaders who approach their employees with a sense of antagonism have fewer instances where employees take advantage of them. They can use “tough love” to “whip employees into shape.” Where supervisors who aim for popularity fail in setting boundaries for their employees, authoritarian leaders make those boundaries clear through well-defined consequences for crossing

them. This approach to leadership seldom suffers from employees taking liberties or taking advantage of a perceived weakness from the supervisor.

THE CASE FOR LOVE

Well, that's a case closed then, right? Make sure that you scare your employees, and they will treat you with respect and dare not cross you. This has been a great training session. Thank you for participating. Good luck!

If it were only so easy. While an authoritarian approach to leadership might give you the appearance of being respected, it's not so likely that this respect would be genuine. Real respect must be earned, and involves respecting others. If you genuinely care about your employees, you may not have to work so hard getting them to do what needs to be done, uncovering instances where they were too afraid to approach you, or squashing conflicts with your employees that might tend to flare up when you approach your leadership role from an authoritarian standpoint. Perhaps being loved is not such a useless approach to effective leadership.

THE CASE AGAINST EITHER

The problem in leadership isn't being more loved nor is it being feared more. Both have their upsides, but each also has its downside. Beloved leaders might be popular, but they might also be easily manipulated and put into unnecessary situations where it feels as if the inmates are running the asylum. Conversely, those who use fear as a leadership tactic frequently have to deal with such issues as insubordination or dishonesty from their

employees. In addition, a work environment that is marked by fear turns into a poisonous place to work. Authoritarian leaders often experience higher rates of turnover from their employees. This means time that might otherwise be productively spent is now redirected towards training new employees. Any efficiency such a leader hoped to gain by cracking the whip has been lost when employees won't stay for any length of time. There must be a middle way.

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Since both leadership styles have both upsides and downsides, perhaps the best approach is to be a little bit of both. Like an authoritative leader, you want to have clear boundaries with clear consequences, but you do not want to create a fearful and poisonous work environment where everyone is trying to stab each other in the back and no one will tell you the truth, but whatever you want to hear.

In addition, a middle ground approach would mean that you do value your employees as people. You are genuinely interested in their lives. You understand that respect is a two-way street and must be earned. Yet, you impose clear boundaries. While you and your employees may be equal in both a personal and possibly even a professional sense, you have a different job than your employees. You face a different set of pressures. The key to understanding whether it is better to be loved or feared is considering the big picture and the long term, and in each situation, which approach would be more effective in the long run for that situation.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Steve was recently promoted to the manager position at his bookstore. Because he suddenly found that he had new responsibilities, he became extremely invested in his new position. Similarly, Angela also had been recently promoted. While Steve tried to crack the whip and boss his employees around, Angela tried to understand what motivated her employees and sought to align their motivations with what she needed from them. Soon, Steve found all of his employees either quitting on him or they no longer were friendly with him. His employees would do their work, but often it was the bare minimum. The work environment when he was in charge became quiet, serious, and tense. When Angela was in charge, the effect was like a ray of sunshine lighting up a dark room. Employees laughed and joked with her and with each other, but they also worked extremely hard.

*In order to lead, one must
first learn how to serve.*

THE I CHING



LEADERSHIP AS SERVICE

Whether you prefer an authoritative leadership style, a lenient one, or something in between, one factor that can truly enhance your effectiveness in leadership is to see yourself as serving the needs of your employees even as you serve the needs of your company or organization. Often these two sets of needs will coincide. The needs of your employees are the needs of a well-run organization as well. When they do contradict, seeing yourself as a kind of servant to your employees can help you to better weigh your priorities in both the long and short terms.

TOP-DOWN HIERARCHIES

The traditional form of hierarchy in business organizations is known as a top-down or vertical structure. This means that you have a clear ranking from CEO to mail-room clerk, and everyone understands their place. This structure has both advantages and disadvantages. If you are a leader in this type of organization, it is helpful to understand what those advantages and disadvantages are in order to better serve the needs of your employees.

Advantages:

- You always know who is in charge and who to report to.
- Decision making is efficient.
- Advancement up the career ladder is clearly defined.

Disadvantages:

- The potential for power-based politics and maneuvering can result in flattering and yes-man type behavior rather than providing accurate information.
- Employees at the bottom can feel less of a stake in the goals of a company.
- If you have a weak leader, you will have a weak organization.
- Information from management and higher-ups is prone to distortion as it trickles down through multiple filters.
- Both management and employees can have a distorted understanding of what the other group does and has to deal with.

A LATERAL PERSPECTIVE

An alternative to the traditional vertical organizational structure is known as a lateral or horizontal structure. In this structure, the different departments are administered by project managers who report to an upper management and serve as a conduit between the team and the administrators. This approach has its own pros and cons:

Advantages:

- This approach tends to reinforce creativity and innovation because employees are more willing to take risks when they know that they won't lose status in doing so.
- The organization can better adapt to changes in circumstances because communication does not have to go through as many filters.
- Employees have a greater feeling of stake in the organization.
- Employees have a greater sense of autonomy which can lead to greater development of a wide array of skills.

Disadvantages:

- When something goes wrong, the lack of a clear structure can lead to blaming of different teams and departments.
- Decision making can be a slow process.
- The lack of authoritarian supervisors can lead to an undisciplined and chaotic work environment.
- Transitions from vertical to horizontal organization structures can be difficult because those used to authoritarian management styles find it difficult to adjust to seeing co-workers as peers.

KNOW YOUR EMPLOYEES

Regardless of which organizational structure you employ, to lead effectively it helps to know your employees on a personal and professional level. Obviously, with larger corporations, the former is more difficult than the latter, but taking the time to get to know your employees as people can help inform your decision making in ways that not only affect employee morale but also help in crafting more effective approaches. If you understand what it is like to work on the front lines, you can better address problems in such a way that does not create additional problems. Keeping abreast of what goes on in your employees' lives can also help you in addressing each person as an individual.

GENUINE EMPATHY AND THE POWER TO LEAD

Brian Browne Walker's commentary on the *I Ching* offers some excellent advice about leadership: "*Gentleness and understanding create in others an unconscious willingness to be led.*" When you can genuinely understand where your employees are coming from, you are able to know exactly what to do or say to get the best results from them. This requires developing your own capacity for empathy. Here are some suggestions for developing your empathy:

- **Listen.** You may not always understand where an employee is coming from. Even the most creative and open minded of people can fail to grasp another individual's unique circumstances. Consequently, the only way you can understand where others are coming from is by listening to them. Listening in this sense is not

merely listening to the words a person says, but listening for the underlying needs that the person may be expressing even while failing to articulate this.

- **Validate.** Particularly in times where people seem far apart in their beliefs, it's really easy to look at a person with whom you disagree and see an enemy. However, we all have the capacity to feel the same types of emotions, whether these are fear, anger, or joy. We also all have the same basic needs. When you try to recognize that beneath any disagreement are two people who need love and respect, it's not so easy to see someone you disagree with as the enemy.
- **Consider your own attitude.** When you find yourself in a disagreement with someone else, ask yourself what you want from the interaction. Do you want to see the other person punished? Is this about winning or being right? Wanting to see another person punished presumes that you know best, a dangerously arrogant attitude, especially from a leader, who should be looking to serve employees.
- **Suspend your own viewpoint.** When you are trying to understand another person's feelings, your own point of view isn't a necessary perspective. In fact, it gets in the way of seeing another's point of view. Remember that suspending your views is not the same as dropping them or changing them. Your viewpoint will still be there if you still need it.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Alice was running late to work because of a horrible traffic jam. She was nervous about being late, but she was not afraid because she knew that her boss Juan would listen to her explanation and be understanding because even though he was strict about tardiness, he would also listen to your explanation and take that into account. Instead of trying to sneak into work, she went straight to Juan first and let him know that she was late. This was fortunate because Juan had given the rest of his employees specific instructions for how to handle a particular customer service call that was coming in more frequently that day. If Alice had tried to sneak past Juan out of fear of his not being understanding, she would have taken the first customer service call and handled it incorrectly, costing the company a lot of money.

*Edit your life frequently
and ruthlessly. It's your
masterpiece after all.*

NATHAN W. MORRIS



LEADERSHIP BY DESIGN

Few people are actually born to leadership. Most people have to learn how to become good leaders. One important aspect of good leadership is knowing what you are trying to lead others to. This involves careful consideration beforehand.

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Having a plan means that you know what the end result should look like. This can apply to your work environment, the culture, or what you expect from your employees. By having clear idea of what you want from your employees and what you want from yourself, you put yourself in a better position to plan how to meet your goals.

SETTING GOALS

In addition to company-wide goals, each leader of a team should have specific goals for their team that complement the company's goals. These goals can inform how you make policy and what kind of team culture you foster. If you have ever been involved in meetings or team building exercises that have seemed to be fun but ultimately pointless or a waste of time, you can understand the need to have clear goals to strive for.

Then activities such as meetings, exercises, or other activities assume a greater importance. In order to be effective at setting and reaching goals, it is helpful to use the S.M.A.R.T. acronym:

- **Specific.** When you establish specific goals for your team rather than general goals, you are far more likely to follow through.
- **Measurable.** One of the reasons for making a goal specific is so you can measure what the successful completion of that goal looks like, an important aspect of beginning with the end in mind.
- **Achievable.** If a goal is too easy, it can also be easy to justify giving up on it because it's not important enough. Make sure you set goals for your team that are challenging but achievable.
- **Realistic.** While being ambitious can help you to achieve large goals, being too ambitious can often lead to rebellion, both in your team and in yourself.
- **Time-targeted.** When you decide on setting a goal, you must also decide on when you expect your team to achieve that goal. You must be specific. This allows you to organize your goal-achieving behavior with a deadline.

In addition to being SMART about goal setting, there are some other steps you can take that will help you remain committed to achieving your goals.

- Tell someone else about your goal. This will help to keep you accountable and committed.

- When appropriate, divide your team goals into smaller milestones. When you collectively reach a milestone, reward your team. Small rewards can help your team to stay enthusiastic.
- If your team fails to meet a milestone, don't use this as an occasion to beat them or yourself up or to give up. Instead, determine where and how you failed and how to avoid doing so in the future. Most importantly, don't give up.
- Perhaps the single most important step is to choose a goal that is meaningful to you, your team, and to the company.

DETERMINING VALUES

Setting goals for yourself, your team, and in some cases your company are important aspects of developing a plan for your leadership. However, on another level, these goals are actually not as big picture as you can get. To really understand how you can lead others, you must account for your own values and the company's values as well. When you have a good grasp on what is important to you, this can clarify when to stand your ground and when to relent when you disagree with others, which is a position you will find yourself in often as a leader.

Values are not the same as morals and ethics. In fact, what you value is both unique to you and can change over time. How can you know what you value?

The following steps can help:

- Identify one of your happiest moments in your life. Who were you with? What were you doing? What factors contributed to your happiness?
- Identify one of your proudest moments in life. Was this a shared experience? With whom? What elements in the experience made you feel proud?
- Identify one of your most fulfilling moments. Rather than a happiest moment, this would be when you felt the greatest sense of satisfaction. What need was fulfilled?
- When you work on determining your core values, identifying anywhere from 5-10 values should be sufficient. More than 10 can make decision making too confusing.
- When values are in conflict, identifying which ones take precedent can help clarify your thinking in these moments.
- Since your values can change, reassessment on a regular basis can help you to determine if these values still apply. Ask yourself if you are proud, happy, and fulfilled by these values. Ask yourself if you would feel comfortable identifying your core values to another human being. If the answer to either of these questions is no, then you should probably reassess.
- While it is both possible and likely to value other people, this may not be as helpful as valuing abstract principles which exist outside of individuals. Principles such as honesty, adventurousness, etc.,

can serve as signposts for your behavior and decisions throughout your life.

A MISSION STATEMENT

Imagine you are somehow able to listen in at your funeral. What will everyone say about you? What would you like to be said about you? Now that you have taken the time to identify some specific goals and some core values, the next step is to write out a mission statement. Think of the mission statement as a kind of personal constitution. Just as the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia uses the Constitution of Australia as a guide toward decision making, this mission statement can help to serve as your guide. This can be your own personal mission statement, but it is also helpful to work out a mission statement with your team. However, the most important step in making these mission statements is that you have identified what you truly value and understand why you have set the goals that you have set, both for your team and for yourself.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jennifer and Delphina had both been promoted at the same time. During their leadership training course, both were encouraged to write a personal mission statement as a guide for their decisions. Delphina took the time to think about her values and spent the weeks of her training honing her mission statement. Jennifer blew it off until the last minute, when she jotted down a few things using catchall words like synergy and win-win. When

they both began working with their teams, Delphina immediately faced a crisis situation where her employees became angry with each other. Since one of her core values was cooperation over competition, she was able to get both employees to understand where the other was coming from and resolve the issue. Both of her employees though it was they who had fixed the issue and felt empowered in the process. Meanwhile Jennifer faced her own crisis situation but found herself unable to make a decision at a critical point. She took her work home with her and would second guess herself so that her employees didn't take her seriously.

*He that is good with a
hammer tends to think
everything is a nail.*

ABRAHAM MASLOW



UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATION

You can't always get into the head of another person. Even if this were possible, understanding what motivates another person can be so complex that even that person is unaware of her or his motivations. However, to a certain degree, the essence of leadership is getting others to do what you need them to do, as if it were their original motives themselves. While you may not be able to specifically identify another person's motives, there is a good rule of thumb that was developed by Kenneth Burke called dramatism.

DRAMATISM

The great Canadian rock band Rush once sang, *"All the world's indeed a stage, and we are merely players."* To be fair, they borrowed this notion from William Shakespeare who noted that each person is like the star actor in his or her own play. Kenneth Burke developed his theory of dramatism based on this notion. If you understand that people see themselves as the star of their own drama, this can be the first step towards making a good guess as to what motivates them. If you can at the very least think in terms of how other people are motivated, you are better able to develop compassion for them. With compassion, you are better able to

understand another person's needs and how to meet those needs while motivating the person to help meet yours or your company's needs.

THE PENTAD

The key aspect of Burke's dramatism is referred to as the pentad, but if you have ever taken a class in journalism, you may recognize the pentad in another form, the five W's. The pentad and the five W's are similar and both allow you to think about who is doing what to whom, and how and why they are doing it. Here is the Pentad and how it relates to the Five W's.

- **Scene.** The scene of something is the same thing as the Where and the When of the five W's. This doesn't merely refer to the physical place where something may be occurring, but to the overall environment as well. When and where something occurs may explain exactly why the situation is playing out the way it is.
- **Agent.** This refers to the actor or actors in a given situation. This also corresponds to the Who in the five W's. When you look for motives behind people's behaviors, who they are can be one source of motives, but their environment and the other factors of the pentad could also be sources for motives. For example, someone who comes to work not dressed properly may be simply rebelling against work policies. In this case, the motive is more about this particular person. Another possible motive however is that this person has been out of work so long that she or he does not have the nice clothes needed to meet the office policy. In this

case, the motive is not really about the person or agent but more about the scene or situation, this person having been out of work so long to not have the appropriate clothes.

- **Act.** The act is similar to the What in the five W's. It is the action that is taking place in a given situation. If you assigned some work to an employee who didn't finish the work in the time you expected, you could look at motivation in terms of the agent, in this case the employee needs more training or maybe doesn't work as hard as you would expect. However, another possible "motive" lies in the action itself. Perhaps the task you assigned is a complicated enough task that cannot be accomplished in the time you expect, or this can at least be a major factor.
- **Agency.** The agency aspect of the Pentad does not strictly conform to the Five W's, however, if you add the question of How, this gets to what agency is referring to. In the previous example, the nature of the work that you assigned to the employee might be difficult, and you may already realize that the employee is a diligent worker who tends to perform well. However, if the employee picked an inefficient way to go about working on the assignment, this could explain why it didn't meet up with your expectations. This would place the "motive" under agency where the problem is not the act itself, nor the agent or scene, but instead the problem is in how the agent is going about doing the act.
- **Purpose.** The purpose part of the pentad corresponds to the Why of the five W's. Imagine that in our previous example you gave an

assignment to an employee who didn't complete the assignment in what you considered was a reasonable amount of time. If you have looked at all the other aspects of the pentad to get an idea of why this is so, analyzing the purpose may help. Perhaps your employee didn't understand why this task was necessary or what it was trying to accomplish.

As you can see, when you use the pentad to analyze situations, it allows you to think about all the different aspects of a situation. An effective leader won't simply blame the employee for not living up to an expectation. Instead, leaders who are effective can analyze the different aspects of a situation in terms of the pentad to understand the situation better. It may turn out that the employee was perfectly justified in not living up to an expectation, and you have saved both the employee and yourself the hard feelings created from a misplaced lecture.

GUILT AND REDEMPTION

According to Burke, on some level most people in our society and culture are motivated by guilt. He uses this term loosely to include emotions such as shame, disgust, anxiety, and embarrassment. From this viewpoint, people act to try to avoid guilt emotions or to find redemption, which is what makes those feelings go away. It is this attempt to move from guilt to redemption that puts an individual's "drama" in dramatism. There are a few factors that contribute in a large way to people's feelings of guilt and inadequacy:

- The social order or hierarchy. As people interact with each other, we unconsciously and consciously create a sort of pecking order through our language and concepts. This gives individuals a sense of relation to others in terms of being perceived as equals or as superior or inferior to another person or group of people.
- The Negative, in this sense, is an act of rejecting your place in this perceived social order. Burke used the term “rotten with perfection” to describe the situation where people realize that their place in a social hierarchy is to some degree arbitrary. Those who inhabit a superior position may feel guilt or anxiety because our language includes a notion of perfection that is impossible to achieve in actuality. For example, someone who is known for being particularly generous might experience shame or guilt for wanting to put himself or herself first on occasion. The idea of perfect generosity is unattainable, so the person feels guilty, pushing them to seek redemption. Conversely, someone in an inferior social position might realize that he or she is not as lowly as circumstances bear out and this becomes motivation towards redemption.
- Victimhood is another factor in this drama where the guilty person lays the blame for her or his circumstances on an external source, another person or societal condition. There are two types of victimhood: universal, which blames everyone and everything, and fractional, where a person blames a specific group or individual.

In vilifying the other person, the guilty person can assume a heroic role in their drama.

- Redemption is the final stage of this type of drama where the person purges guilt through a kind of death, either symbolic, as in a transformation in character or a confession of one's sins or misdeeds, or in actuality by truly dying. It is uncommon and disrespectful, for example, to speak ill of the dead. Burke considered the redemption stage a transformation where one transcends the old order of social hierarchies and a new order is created. You can look at Burke's transition from Guilt to Redemption as following two paths: the first begins with the status quo followed by guilt or anxiety about one's place in that status quo, followed by identifying a scapegoat, followed confession and repentance which lead to the transformation of the old order into a new order.

This description of the move from guilt to redemption can be helpful in understanding how people come to actively dislike others. Often at the root of ill-will is a feeling of inadequacy and guilt in an individual.

IDENTIFICATION

Another aspect of Burke's theory of dramatism is called identification. If you have ever heard someone say (or have said yourself), "I can really identify with that person," you're getting at the heart of what Burke means by identification. In some ways it is the opposite of victimage. When you identify with someone else, you are able to feel empathy and compassion for them. In identification, something of you rubs off on the other person

with whom you identify, and something of that person rubs off on you. In leadership, you can create an “unconscious willingness to be led” in another person by identifying with that person and trying to meet the other person’s needs. When you go out of your way to allow an employee off for a vacation he or she is excited about, you create in that person a willingness to follow you and make your goals their goals.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Marjorie noticed that James had come into work upset. He had flopped down into his chair dramatically and when he typed on his computer, he banged on the keys. He normally was a quiet worker who worked hard, so this seemed out of character. Instead of getting angry at James’ disruptive behavior, Marjorie tried to analyze why he might be acting this way from what she was able to observe. She considered the scene, which was that James had been coming back from a long weekend where he was going to visit his father, whom he hadn’t seen in a decade. Marjorie decided that this may be why he was acting uncharacteristically angry and aggressive. She asked him if he would join her in her office to discuss how he was doing. Instead of criticizing him, she asked him how meeting his father had gone, and he began to cry. She listened and commiserated with him for the next half hour and asked him if he needed to go home. Her empathy towards him helped him to feel better. He thanked her and returned to his work, but with an added energy.

*Criticism, like rain, should
be gentle enough to nourish
a man's growth without
destroying his roots.*

FRANK A. CLARK



CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Understanding what motivates the people you are leading is a great way to better assist them, but you also have other pressures upon you as a leader, which can include your ultimate goal for your company as well as pressure from higher ups in your own hierarchy. What's more, even when you are an understanding and compassionate leader, some may seek to test this. The difference between an understanding but effective leader versus a weak leader is a how well you respond when people attempt either consciously or unintentionally to cross boundaries. When someone engages in behavior that's detrimental to your overall leadership vision, you occasionally have to intervene. What's important in this case is that you intervene in an effective way that makes the situation better for everyone involved.

WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS?

When you have to criticize or correct an employee, one of the most important things to consider are your own motivations. While it may be tempting to want to punish an employee who "acts up," this can frequently create a poisonous environment where the employee misses the message of improvement and only hears a message that involves

asserting your superior position over that employee. This can recreate a sense of a parent –child relationship which runs counter to seeing the other person involved as a person and an equal who deserves respect. Punishment often has unintended consequences, as well. If you look at the number of criminals who leave prison only to return again after a time, it becomes evident that punishment can harden someone into repeating behaviors as much as it can deter that person from those behaviors. Sometimes it is helpful to retreat from a potentially volatile interaction rather than addressing a person when you are angry. You can use email to schedule a time to address an issue, for example, which has the additional purpose of allowing you to restore your own emotional balance. Ultimately, you're in conflict with an employee because he or she has crossed a boundary, whether it's a social boundary or one related to your expectations for work. The more productive and effective approach is to find a way to correct the behavior rather than finding a way to punish the employee.

A POSITIVE VISION OF SUCCESS

One way to approach an intervention where you need to let an employee know about an area of improvement or an intolerable behavior that needs to be corrected is to try to envision the situation playing out in such a way that there are no losers. Instead, you want to consider a way in which everyone has an opportunity to come out a winner. For an employee who has trouble with being at work on time or at all, this might be a powerful move that allows that employee to take greater responsibility in her or his life, an improvement that can carry over into the long term, for example.

When you develop a positive vision of what a successful correction looks like, you are better able to stay out of the punishment or blaming mentality that so often sabotages good intentions and well-meaning criticism.

FEEDBACK SANDWICH

Experiencing criticism can be a stressful situation, and the common approach towards hearing criticism is to prepare a defense. One way to soften another person's experience of your criticism is to use the idea of a feedback sandwich. Instead of telling people what they are doing wrong all at once, you can mix the negative with genuine positive comments as well. It's important that these are genuine, however, or you can come across as insincere and manipulative and lose any goodwill or trust you might have earned with your employees. Finding a positive thing to say about an employee who needs correction serves an additional purpose as well. Whenever you are angry at another person, a good tactic to help spur your thinking away from that person's faults is to consider something positive about that person. Having something good to say about your employee can help to put the entire situation into a more manageable perspective.

FOLLOWING UP (VERSUS BADGERING)

When you set goals, it's important that you set a goal that is achievable and corresponds to a time frame. Similarly, when you intervene with an employee about an area that needs improvement, it is helpful to have a definite view of success, as well as a time frame for when you can

check back with the employee. This follow-up will work better when it is approached as a *“how are you doing with this?”* rather than a *“have you done what I told you to?”* style conversation. Furthermore, you should consider avoiding two types of extremes: not following up at all and overdoing your follow-up by continuously returning to the issue. When you initially discuss the issue with your employee, it will be most effective if you both identify a time in the future to schedule a follow-up conversation where you can check in with each other. If you never follow-up it erodes your credibility when you do offer constructive criticism because it makes it seem as if there was no real need for criticism. On the other hand, if you continuously come back to the situation that prompted the criticism, you put the employee into a guilt-redemption type drama. If you follow up with your employee at a scheduled time, and that employee has not shown improvement, you can re-assess what needs to be done further, and use that time to schedule another follow-up. Keeping your follow-ups structured can help you avoid the pitfalls that can turn following up and being invested in your employee’s success into a form of harassing your employee.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Cedric was initially upset with Ginny, one of his employees, because she was consistently a couple of minutes late to work every day but today she was over an hour late and came in with no explanation. Normally, Cedric was lenient if his employees were less than five minutes late to work, but he felt that Ginny had begun to take advantage of this, and her being late today with no explanation was crossing a line with Cedric. However, he

knew if he confronted her about it right now while he was angry, he might only communicate his anger and not the necessity that she change her behavior. In his office, he looked at her file and found that while she was late almost every day, she was also frequently someone who stayed late after work to help handle the last customers who came in right at closing time. He decided to call her into his office and ask her to explain why she was so late. When she explained that her car had broken down, Cedric understood, but he also told her that she needed to let him know this when she first came in. He used this time to express his concern that she was too often late. He also told her that he did appreciate her tendency to stay after work. He asked her if she had an idea of how she could start getting to work on time more consistently. He also suggested that she did not have to stay late every time and that other employees should also pick up the slack.

*You catch more flies with
honey than with vinegar.*

PROVERB



THE IMPORTANCE OF TONE

In your role as leader or manager, you will often find yourself in situations where you have to perform well even when you are not at your best. One truth about effective leadership is that when things go right, you will want to deflect the praise to your team members, but when things go wrong, it's all your fault. This can put you under constant pressure, and some of your more socially conscious and astute employees might recognize this fact, but most won't. Nevertheless, employees and supervisors can forgive much when you approach them with the right tone.

LIGHTING A FIRE

You will often find yourself in a position where you need to get your employees energized and motivated to work hard and enthusiastically. One who has adopted the rule-through-fear paradigm will consider this the time to become forceful and aggressive, but this can frequently backfire. Instead, an effective leader uses inspiration and positivity to harness enthusiasm in employees. Lighting a fire isn't akin to burning down the house so much as shining a light to guide your employees. Here are some suggestions for increasing employees' enthusiasm:

- Share inspiring quotes, speeches, or ideas. While the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* is not a great example of ethical leadership, it does give a good idea of how powerfully inspiration can foster enthusiasm in employees. This is why coaches in professional sports like to give the “Win one for the Gipper” style speeches.
- Use upbeat music to get people going. Music that has a good beat and makes people want to dance also helps to instill enthusiasm and a kind of esprit de corps.
- Celebrate group and individual successes in order to foster a positive and forward-looking morale.

CALMING A STORM

If you're successfully engaging your employees, it is inevitable that small conflicts will arise. While it might be tempting to see these conflicts as a negative, and in truth if they are allowed to rage out of control they will have negative effects, the fact that people are engaged enough to get angry or tense shows that they are employing their creative energies, and that's a positive. However, when tempers flare, it takes a calm leader to be the eye of the storm and channel that energy in positive ways or calm it so that employees can function productively. Here are some suggestions:

- Always address conflicts from a place of calm. You may have to take a time out or allow others to take a time out from their own anger. Try to do so from a place of empathy and understanding. Avoid calling out employees in front of others. For example, when two employees are in conflict with each other, send one of them

on a break, while you discuss the situation with the other. Be sure and give each employee the chance to tell their side of the conflict and make sure you listen more than you talk.

- When you speak to your employees about conflicts, make sure you are specific and that you address the issue in terms of behavior and not in terms of the employee's character traits.
- Discuss how the conflict affects the rest of your team, but avoid doing so with an accusatory tone.
- Allow employees to give you their understanding of what caused the conflict rather than identifying the cause yourself.
- Additionally, allow employees to suggest solutions for resolving the conflict. If necessary and appropriate, act as a mediator between two employees who have had a conflict with each other. However, when doing so, make sure everyone can address each other from a place of calm.
- Allow everyone involved to agree upon the appropriate action to take in order to restore the peace.
- Most importantly, communicate from a place of mutual respect for all parties involved. Often in the aftermath of a conflict, the parties involved may feel either embarrassment or they may feel resentment towards the other parties involved. Help to restore the sense of mutual respect by treating all parties with the same degree of respect regardless of any perception of their level of fault or culpability in the conflict.

ADULT VS PARENT

One idea that comes to us from the psychological approach of transactional analysis is that when people interact with each other, they tend to slip into pre-formed scripts based on how they have experienced authority from authority figures when they were children. These scripts can frequently allow people to engage in escalating behaviors that create vicious cycles of conflict. Transactional analysis recognizes three primary styles of behavior in social interactions:

- **Child.** A person's need to escape responsibility can cause them to slip into child mode, where they can act dismissive and rebellious. People operating in child mode often dismiss other people's criticisms and maintain an attitude they are going to do what they want regardless of how others feel.
- **Parent.** When someone feels a need to assert control over a situation, often in a case where they feel powerless, they may slip into parent mode. From the sound of it, you might think this is an example of where someone has adopted the voice of reason, but more often than not, it is the voice of authority and not a very reasonable authority at that. If you have ever experienced someone talking to you as if you were a child, that person was most likely operating in Parent mode.
- **Adult.** The ideal mode to operate in is Adult mode. Those who operate from this mode are concerned with reality as it is, rather than disregarding reality like someone might do who is operating

in child mode, or trying to control reality like someone operating in parent mode.

CHANGING THE SCRIPT

If the child, parent, and adult mode behaviors are scripts that people slip into, what keeps people playing their roles, and how can someone slip out of a role. In transactional analysis, there are two types of transactions: complementary and crossed. A complementary transaction means the behavioral modes match up and can continue indefinitely. One person's child mode evokes another person's parent mode and things can spiral out of control into perpetual conflict. In order to intervene, one person has to engage in a behavioral mode that doesn't complement the other's behavior. This creates a crossed transaction. When a transaction becomes crossed, this destabilizes the scripted behaviors, where those involved seek to find a new complementary behavior. Keep in mind that in this scheme, Parent to Child and vice versa is complementary, but so too is Adult to Adult. The way to change the script then is for someone to adopt an Adult mode of behavior. When this turns the transaction from a complementary transaction to a crossed transaction, the other person seeks to find a new equilibrium in a new complementary transaction, so they will in turn also assume the complementary Adult role.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Heath was expecting a report from Alex. When he emailed Alex asking if Alex had finished the report, Alex replied in an email, "*Quit badgering*

me. I'll finish it when I'm ready to." While Alex's childish response angered Heath, he decided not to react in anger. He did not reply to Alex's email until he had calmed down. Then he sent Alex an email asking Alex to come to his office and bring the report or as much of it as he had finished. When Alex arrived, Heath calmly asked Alex if something was wrong and why did Alex respond to his email that way. Alex was stressed out and had misunderstood the tone of Heath's email. Alex thought that Heath was upset with him for not having the report finished. Instead, Heath asked Alex why Alex had been unable to finish the report. The two reviewed Alex's work habits and found that there were ways in which Alex could be more efficient. Heath asked Alex to suggest ways in which Alex could be more efficient in his work. Alex and Heath both worked on a plan to increase Alex's efficiency, and when they followed up a week later, Alex seemed far less stressed out.

*If you wish others to
believe in you, you must
first convince them that
you believe in them.*

HARVEY MACKAY



TRUSTING YOUR TEAM

When you lead others, you will find that they will rise and fall to the expectations you set for them. If you trust your team and act to be worthy of their trust, they will strive to be worthy of your trust.

DANGERS OF MICRO-MANAGING

One of the most difficult habits to keep under control when leading others is the tendency to micromanage. As someone who has a great deal of responsibility within the company as well as being emotionally invested, it is tempting to try and do it all yourself. However micromanaging, even for the most tireless of managers, is the kiss of death in being an effective leader. The dangers of micromanaging are manifold. Your employees will come to resent always having you looking over their shoulder, which can undermine whatever other positive qualities you have going for you as a manager. Another tragic consequence of micromanaging is that you stunt your employees' growth. In order for each employee to become the best they can be, you have to encourage them to find their own way. Sometimes they may not do something in the same way that you would, and your standing aside may result in their failure. Keep in mind however that failure is often a prelude to success. Allowing an employee to make a mistake is akin to allowing that employee to grow and become

better. Here are some suggestions to help you avoid the temptation to micromanage:

- Develop a rule where employees cannot come to you with a problem unless they have also thought of two solutions to that problem.
- While having an open-door policy is helpful in building a rapport with your employees, and it is useful in serving the needs of your employees, you must consider how useful you are being to those employees if you stand in the way of their growth. Consider limiting your employees' access to you in some ways. One possibility is to allow a certain time of day for open access, while other times of day are reserved for appointment only.
- A third suggestion is to resist the urge to jump in at any sign of difficulty. Instead, count slowly to 10 and consider whether this is one of those times where your help is truly necessary versus one of those times where in helping your employees you are actually hurting them.

DELEGATION AND ANXIETY

What frequently stops us from delegating responsibilities to our employees is a fear that they may fail us. However, this distrust of our employees can be more damaging than failure itself. Living in fear keeps our lives in holding patterns and we never grow or allow others to grow. There is no reason to be afraid of failure because it is inevitable. If, however, we are able to view failure as a learning opportunity, then we can become comfortable

with the idea and learn to take risks. Here are some suggestions to help you manage your trepidation about delegation:

- Write down your concerns rather than voicing them or allowing them to swirl in your head. This can help to ventilate anxieties.
- Manage your stress levels through exercise. When you do this regularly, you will tend to feel better physically, which gives emotions such as anxiety less room to take hold.
- Meditate regularly to practice staying in the present. Worry is a future-oriented activity, but one over which you have little control.
- Appreciate and celebrate healthy progress over perfection. Our notion of a perfect situation, a perfectly performed task, or any other number of perfect things that we can imagine is actually a linguistic construction. Actual perfection is something that is completely beyond our control.
- Learn to recognize and counteract magnification, a distorted thinking pattern where you imagine the worst possibility as the most likely possibility. Often, when you feel in the grips of an arousal emotion such as anxiety, you tend to think in shorthand and images rather than in complete sentences. Identifying this shorthand, converting it into complete sentences and investigating the logic of that can help lessen your feeling of anxiety. For example, when you delegate an important task to an employee, your anxiety over the situation might prompt shorthand thoughts such as “failure, disaster, poorhouse.” Translating this into a complete sentence

might look like *“If my employee fails, I will be blamed for the worst possible disaster that can occur at this company; then, I will be fired and go to the poorhouse.”* Now that you have translated the shorthand into a complete sentence, ask yourself if you would truly be fired over this. Often, you wouldn’t have the level of responsibility you have if your bosses were going to be so quick to fire you.

ACES IN THEIR PLACES

One more aspect of delegation can help limit your anxiety. You must delegate in a proper manner. Delegating tasks blindly or randomly can turn disastrous if the person you have delegated a task to is not suited to that task. Fortunately, one reward of getting to know your employees is that you can gain an idea of what each employee excels at. By tailoring the tasks you delegate to your employees’ strengths, you put them in a better position to succeed, and their success is ultimately your success, even if you will inevitably give them all the credit. By putting your aces in their places, you also foster a sense of belonging and importance to each member of your team. If an employee knows that he or she is in that role because you handpicked them for it, this will pay huge dividends in that person’s own confidence, which helps to maximize her or his performance.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

In order to get the most out of your employees, it is helpful to foster a culture of mutual celebration of success, and no success is too small to escape such celebration. Take time out to recognize a job well done and you will encourage additional successes. Cultivating certain emotions in your employees such as enthusiasm, optimism, confidence, and tenacity will help them to perform better and enjoy further successes.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Theresa had always been good at taking a theory and putting it into specific practice before she was promoted to project coordinator. Now in her new role as leader, Theresa found it difficult to let Harrison try to put the theory behind a new project into practice. She found herself looking over his shoulder, which would make Harrison nervous, and he would make mistakes. Finally he asked her if he could try working on the project alone without her input. Theresa agreed that this would be the best approach, but she still felt anxious about the project. When she let Harrison go, she immediately thought of an idea related to the project and started to go off in search of Harrison to let him know. Realizing that she was being a micromanager and not allowing Harrison to thrive, she took a deep breath, counted to ten and decided to let Harrison handle it. Theresa went back into her office and began writing down everything that she was nervous about. While she did this, Harris finished up his initial strategy paper for the project and brought it to Theresa. When she saw it, she realized that Harrison was actually quite talented at this kind of work.

She let him know this and made a point to praise his work in front of the other team members. Theresa also realized her anxiety about Harrison and his role had gone away.

*Trust comes by earning it,
not by expecting it.*

KATIE KACVINSKY



EARNING THE TRUST OF YOUR TEAM

Avoiding micromanagement, delegating tasks properly, and celebrating successes are all ways to increase your high regard and trust for your team, but trust is a two-way street. An effective leader is one whom the followers will trust implicitly. Trust, like respect, does not come automatically. Some people may be naturally inclined to trust people, but the degree of trust you need to lead effectively must be earned.

HONESTY

The most important way to earn trust is to consistently be honest. This can even be helpful when admitting you are wrong or that you don't know the answer. Employees will respect someone who can admit vulnerability more than someone who tries to hide behind a veneer of perfection. Lying to your employees, buttering them up with fake sentiment, or taking credit for their successes are quick ways to make them distrust you. Once employees distrust you, your ability to lead them effectively becomes nearly impossible. However, honesty should never be used as a weapon. You may occasionally have to tell an employee "how it is," but this is exactly where considerations of tone and intent become vitally important.

RELIABILITY

In addition to being honest, an effective leader will earn trust by being reliable in everything she or he does. Conversely, if you prove unreliable, employees will not trust you. This makes it vital to follow through on everything you say. If you indicate that there is a boundary that employees should not cross, you must address it when that boundary is crossed, even if it is with a mild response such as “*don’t do that again.*” If you say you will give an employee certain requested time off, then you must accomplish this. If you tell an employee you will follow up, then it is vital to follow up. Being reliable also means being consistent. Ignoring one employee’s misdeeds or successes is as bad as ignoring every employee’s successes or misdeeds; in some ways, it is even worse because it can communicate a sense of favoritism. The level of pressure and the amount of work you have before you may make it impossible to meet every one of your commitments. However, you can lessen this reality through adopting the following suggestions:

- Keep a well-organized planner, either a calendar or some sort of organizing system where you can write down your commitments. Make a point to acknowledge your receipt of employees’ requests in writing, but also remind employees that you must have requests in writing as well.
- Don’t over-promise and under-deliver. If you aren’t sure if you can award time off, don’t tell the employee that you can. One of the most important things you can tell an employee, and yet one of the most difficult, is that you don’t know or you are not sure. While

you may fear that this will undermine your employee's confidence in you, you can counter this with a statement that you will find out. Make sure that you follow-up, however if you do make that promise.

- If you find that you are unable to meet a previous obligation you made, make sure that you inform the other person as soon as possible. Sometimes an emergency can come up, or the situation can change. You don't need to offer a full explanation most of the time (although in some cases it may be necessary and appreciated), but you do need to let the other person know as soon as you know. If you have a meeting with an employee scheduled, try at that point to reschedule it.

AVAILABILITY

Making yourself available to your employees is another vital aspect of building trust. This can be tricky, however, and you have to use good judgment in determining how available you need to make yourself in order to avoid micromanaging. Nevertheless, you should always allow some time where employees can approach you. If an employee feels you are unapproachable or feels intimidated by you, it can create a situation where you are the last to know about something important going on. While you want to encourage employees to not over-rely upon you, you also want employees to feel they can come to you when they need to. Striking the correct balance can take time and can vary from employee to employee. Some employees may develop better confidence in themselves by being

left to their own devices. Others, particularly new employees, might need your presence a bit more, but it's best to think of yourself in this situation as being like training wheels on a bicycle. At some point the training wheels need to come off. Even then, however, your employees will trust you more knowing that you will figuratively catch them if they fall by being supportive and constructive.

OPENNESS

It may seem as if openness is the same thing as honesty, but there is a bit more to it. Being open is a two-fold characteristic. On the one hand, you want to be up front about your vision for your team, your plan for their success, and even, when appropriate, what changes may be in store. Sometimes you may be in a position of knowing something that's going to happen, and the circumstances won't allow you to inform your employees. However, if employees sense that something is about to happen, this can produce anxiety. Since changes in work can affect a person's livelihood, this anxiety cannot be overlooked or dismissed. Try to engage in empathy about the effect of keeping information from your employees. This can get tricky when trying to strike a balance between the needs of your employees and your bosses, but if you are operating from your own personal mission statement and using your own core values, then making tough decisions can actually be emotionally rewarding in that you get an opportunity to make a decision that you can be proud of.

The other aspect of openness is being open to employees' feedback and criticism. They may not always be correct in their criticism or concerns,

but respecting your employees means giving them a fair hearing. When someone comes to you with a problem with what you are doing or how you are doing things, listen carefully. If you feel yourself getting angry or defensive, it's possible that the employee has struck a nerve. You may not be in a place where you can immediately acknowledge the employee's criticism. If that's the case, schedule a follow-up that will allow you time to assess your employee's concern and what you can do about it. Recent studies have found that people appreciate vulnerability in others far more than an appearance of perfection or invincibility, so don't be afraid to admit when you are wrong or mistaken. This can actually make you a more respected and effective leader than if you demand respect by never apologizing or acknowledging your mistakes.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Darla had received a request from Sarita for a week off in January, so that Sarita could visit her family in India. Initially Darla was unsure if she would be able to grant that request. She told Sarita that she would have an answer for her by the end of the day because she knew that Sarita needed to know soon so she could make travel arrangements. When Darla put in the request to her supervisor, it was denied. Before contacting Sarita, Darla looked through Sarita's personnel files and saw that she had never taken a vacation in the five years that she had been working there. Darla sent an email to her supervisor asking if she could address the issue directly. Darla then sent an email to Sarita letting her know that the request had been denied, but that Darla was going to see if she could get that changed. Darla let Sarita know that they might not have an answer

until after Sarita had left for the day, but that Darla would email Sarita the moment she found out. After presenting Sarita's case directly to her supervisor, Darla got approval. She emailed Sarita that evening to let her know the good news.

*Alone we can do so little;
together we can
do so much.*

HELEN KELLER



BUILDING AND REINFORCING YOUR TEAM

Teams don't immediately come together and experience success overnight. In fact, it takes a good leader to work at turning a group of people into an effective team. This chapter explores the various aspects of building and improving your team.

IDENTIFYING TEAM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

One of the most important activities that you will need to engage in as a leader is constantly assessing the state of your team, each individual employee, and yourself. Before you can put employees in positions to succeed, you have to have a good idea of what their strengths and weaknesses are. Here are some guidelines for how to assess team and team member strengths and weaknesses:

- Include other team-members in the assessment process. Allow each member of the team a chance to identify both his or her and other team members' strengths and weaknesses. Ideally, this can be done privately so that no team-member develops resentment

towards another for perceived unwarranted criticism. This also allows you to compare your assessment with others.

- When an employee or the entire team experiences a failure or a success, try to identify why this came about, and who was most responsible. In the case of failure, identifying the responsible person is not about casting blame, but it is about identifying what went wrong, so you know where and how to improve. When you are analyzing a success, however, it is good to give credit when someone (other than yourself) was particularly instrumental in that success.
- Determine how consistently an employee performs in a given role. If that employee is consistently unsuccessful, try to find another opportunity and role for that employee to be successful. Identify the skills necessary for success in certain roles, and when an employee is consistently successful in a role, note these skills as part of that employee's skill set. If an employee fails to perform consistently, you may also identify these skills as weaknesses in that particular employee.
- Observe employees when they act alone or outside of the team structure in order to determine how their strengths and weaknesses might change in different contexts. Perhaps it is not a lack of a particular skill that is the weakness, but an inability to apply that skill in a team setting, or vice versa.

IDENTIFY TEAM ROLES

Dr. Meredith Belbin identifies nine team roles that can help make up a balanced and effective team.

- **The Plant.** The plant is the highly creative and unconventional member of a team. They tend to be strong in thinking outside the box but their primary weakness is a tendency to be forgetful.
- **The Monitor Evaluator (ME).** This person is good at providing a logical and dispassionate view of the range of decisions before a team. They tend to have difficulties with being overly critical and slow-moving.
- **The Coordinator (CO).** This employee (often it will be you) helps the team to focus on goals and to delegate work effectively. They tend to either over-delegate or under-delegate and end up micromanaging.
- **The Resource Investigator (RI).** This employee will tend to understand how your team's work can best translate to the rest of the world. They will be good at understanding the competition and developing connections with others outside and inside the team framework, but they can have difficulties with following up on or getting in-depth information.
- **The Implementer.** This role involves someone who is good at taking theory and putting it into practice. They try to find strategies on how to make an idea work in the most efficient manner.

Implementers have difficulty considering alternative approaches and may be slow to give up on a favored idea.

- **Completer-Finishers.** These team members excel at the end of a task. They make sure everything is functioning ideally. These employees act as a kind of quality control. Their strength, having high standards, can also be their weakness, in that they tend to be perfectionists.
- **Team workers (TW).** These employees are really good at smoothing over the tensions and difficulties that come up when people are working hard on creative endeavors. They excel at working and playing with others, but they can be indecisive when it comes time to make team decisions about the best course of action.
- **Shapers.** These employees act as a kind of engine for the team. They can effectively get others going and create momentum. Typically shapers are highly driven and enthusiastic individuals. Their weakness tends to be being overly aggressive and temperamental in their desire to get the team's work done.
- **The Specialist.** The specialist of the group might only know how to do one thing, but she or he is an expert at it. Their focus is narrow and in-depth, which can be both their strength and their weakness.

An ideal team will be balanced with all nine roles being expressed. Since many teams are smaller than nine people, you may find that different team

members excel at multiple roles. When you identify a key strength in one of your employees, for example, an employee who is highly energetic, than you can help them fulfill one or more roles on your team. The energetic employee for example might be good at being a shaper as well as being a resource investigator. Someone who is highly critical can be either a completer finisher or a monitor evaluator or both.

DESIGN EXERCISES WITH SPECIFIC GOALS

Often you may want to give team members a break from working on their normal projects to meet as a team and improve team morale or functioning. Sometimes getting a team together for a meeting or a team building activity can actually be an exercise in futility. In order to use meetings and team building exercises effectively, it is helpful to have specific goals in mind, to identify those goals to your team members, and to follow up. For example, doing a trust building exercise after a time when team members were at each other's throats is helpful, but if you only do the trust building exercise the one time, after a while team members may forget the point or lose the benefits they gained from engaging in the exercise the one time. When planning a meeting, for instance, identify why the meeting is necessary and plan an agenda to keep the meeting organized. Sometimes the necessity is quite simple. For example, scheduling time for team members to play together can help them to recharge after a particularly grueling project. It can also help them build more of a rapport with each other. Having specific goals for an activity does not preclude having an activity achieve multiple goals.

WHAT TO AVOID

When planning team-building exercises, make sure that you don't undermine your attempt to improve your team. Here are some suggestions of what to avoid in team building:

- Make sure that your team-building goals are relevant to your team's needs, so that they are worth taking regular time away from other work to improve.
- Make sure that your team-building activities are not simply one-time affairs; but that they are consistently worked on to reinforce your goal for the exercise.
- While athletics can be fun for many employees, they can also be destructive towards building team morale, especially if they are focused simply on competition and winning.
- If you use team-building exercises, try to incorporate them more frequently than once or twice a year. Incorporating these exercises monthly or weekly helps to reinforce your goals.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Mark reviewed his employees' records regarding the previous project. He found that Marcus had been particularly good at meeting with clients from another company and getting the dirt on that company's project. Now that a new project had begun, Mark was in need of someone who could research a similar project being undertaken by another team at another company to determine their progress. Knowing that Marcus could be

really persuasive in getting people to talk when he went to a hangout that was popular with employees from both companies, Mark asked Marcus to reprise his role. Mark let Marcus off of work early so he could get to the local hangout. Marcus was able to schmooze with employees from the other company, who let Marcus know that they were having trouble getting their project off of the ground. When Marcus told Mark the news, Mark understood exactly how much time he had to get his team to complete their project. A month later after successful completion of a project that would mean millions for the company, Mark took a moment to specifically single out Marcus's good job on getting the skinny about their competitors.

*I will be calm; I will be
mistress of myself.*

JANE AUSTEN



YOU ARE THE BOSS OF YOU

We've reached the point in this book where you can understand all the ins and outs of leading others. However, if you cannot lead yourself effectively than you will never be able to get others to follow you. The most important habit that effective people can have, whether they lead others or not, is to be proactive. Think of proactive as the opposite of reactive. Instead of having the world act upon you, you take action to make yourself into the kind of leader anyone would follow.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD YOU FOLLOW?

If you have been working on your mission statement and identifying your core values, this question is probably not too difficult to answer. If you understand what you value in both yourself and in others, then you can work at shaping yourself into that kind of leader. Keep in mind that developing into the kind of leader that you would follow involves constantly re-assessing where you are at in terms of your values, your goals, and your overall mission. The further you go down the path of leadership, the more necessary it becomes to refine your skills and improve yourself. This requires both detachment and self-honesty. Being detached means that

you are able to dispassionately observe where you are strong and where you are weak. Self-honesty is the capacity to identify personal strengths and weaknesses.

SELF-AWARENESS

In order to be an effective employee, an effective leader, and an effective person, you must have the capacity to reflect and be aware of yourself. Being self-aware involves multiple dimensions of the self. Taking care of physical needs through exercise and maintaining a good diet are factors in being aware of your physical self. Disciplining your mind through meditation that allows you to manage your emotions effectively is an example of developing your emotional and psychological awareness. You also want to have a good idea of the big picture. Are you satisfied with where you are and where you are going? Imagine once again that you are at your funeral. How would you imagine the things people have to say about you would square with your life's goals and your mission statement?

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Self-improvement is a long term game, but as you work continuously on improving yourself, it is important to keep certain pitfalls in mind.

- Navel gazing can occur when you become overly focused on yourself. This means that you become self-absorbed and self-centered.

- Another pitfall of working to improve yourself constantly is that you can become overly convinced of your own self-importance.
- Finally, if you are always working to improve yourself, you may find that you have gotten stuck in this sense that you are never good enough. A better way to frame this is to think that where you are is always good, but that there is also always room for improvement.

When you find yourself excessively self-oriented, this is a sign that you need to deepen your humility and refocus on serving others. Here are some ways to help you foster a greater sense of humility:

- **Allow others to be first and foremost.** Insisting on being the first in line, the first to raise your hand in a class, the first to get the parking spot, and so on, has a tendency to inflate one's sense of self importance. However, when you allow others to have the spotlight or be first, it gives you a better vantage point to appreciate their gifts and what they are able to bring to the table. And when you can do this, you actually find yourself in a better position to lead others because you understand how they can best contribute.
- **Don't insist on being right.** Nobody likes to be wrong, including other people. When you are wrong it puts you in a vulnerable position, which can be scary. However, vulnerability is often what makes a person beautiful and appreciable. Allowing others the legitimacy of their beliefs without correction from you is a charitable act.

- **Listen to what other people think more than telling them what you think.** Dale Carnegie once said that the sweetest sound to anyone is the sound of their own voice. Really paying attention to what other people have to say without having to correct or undermine them helps you to stay oriented outward rather than being self-absorbed.
- **Try not to judge others.** An old saying goes like this, “When you point a finger at someone else, you have three fingers pointing back at you.” While it is tempting to judge another person, to assess what they are doing and how they are doing it, when you do so, you are presuming that you know better. Unfortunately, unless you have lived the experiences of another person, you cannot know what is best for them. Your grasp on another person’s situation will always be incomplete because you don’t have the complete picture.

KEEPING YOUR BALANCE

Throughout the whole process of becoming a more effective leader and a more effective human being, two tools can help smooth the way. The first is developing a greater sense of gratitude. When you wake up in the morning, or while you drink your coffee or eat breakfast, either write down in a notebook or type on your computer a list of five things for which you are grateful. If you keep this gratitude journal every day, it will have a cumulative effect on your keeping a positive outlook.

The second tool's importance cannot be understated. No matter how much you have on your plate at any given time, it is important that you take the time to play. Whether this is a hobby such as painting or an activity such as playing video games, make a point of scheduling play time for yourself at least two to three times a week. This will help you to balance out all the stress you have in your life.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Wendell had been the team manager for the past year. He had originally developed a mission statement that identified a core value as justice and truth. Since then, Wendell had found that his insistence on being right because he knew what was true often led him into conflict with others. While he still believed strongly in truth, he also realized that he had begun to feel more proud when he was able to avoid a fight without having to insist upon being right. One day he got into an argument with Sabrina, a long-time employee over a sales report quote. When he began to insist that his interpretation of the sales quote was the correct one, he found that Sabrina was getting upset. Wendell dropped the subject, but it weighed heavily on his mind. He kept hearing Sabrina's statement that he never listens to her or values her opinion. He realized that he had not listened to her clearly and that even though his opinion about the report seemed right, she had a legitimate point. After contacting her and acknowledging the importance of her opinion and contribution, Wendell apologized to Sabrina. After hanging up the phone, Wendell brought out his mission statement and began adding a core value of listening to others.

*We may encounter
many defeats, but we
must not be defeated.*

MAYA ANGELOU.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Max Lucado:** A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.
- **John Quincy Adams:** If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.
- **Lao Tzu:** A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.
- **Eleanor Roosevelt:** To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.
- **Arnold H. Glasgow:** A good leader takes a little more than his share of blame, a little less than his share of the credit.



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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