

Member's Quarterly

Winter 2019 Edition

Ask the Expert

Enabling Success: Bring Out the Best in Those You Lead

Your organization's performance depends on it



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Question: What's the best way to lead your employees?

When it comes to leadership priorities, enabling the success of others really matters. Those you lead are hungry for growth and development and your organization's performance depends on it. The good news is that there are many ways to do it. Here are a few of my favorites — practical and proven practices to help you become better at enabling the success of others.

What does it mean to 'enable' those you lead?

First up is the question of 'mindset'. When leaders begin to define themselves as people 'developers' rather than 'managers', they bring a powerful mindset to supporting their employees. It definitely shows. Developers actively look for opportunities to provide the right degree of challenge, encouragement and support to those they lead. Two simple examples? They help employees focus on their strengths rather than their limitations and they recognize employees for their efforts as well as their outcomes.

What leadership qualities are key to developing others?

The essential leadership qualities associated with being a people developer are the ways of 'being' a leader that shape your ultimate actions — your 'doing.' Your leadership 'being and doing' are constantly influencing you and those you lead, so it's key to consider both starting with your 'being'.

Two key leadership qualities for a developer are your presence and your compassion. Each helps you connect fully and deeply with those you lead and lay the foundation for effective relationships that can lead to mutual understanding, integrity and trust.

What leadership behaviours bring out the best in those you lead?

Presence, compassion and an openness to failure are three of the behaviours that come up frequently as we help leaders work on their effectiveness:

Be Present — Being fully present to those you lead may seem like an easy undertaking. However, we know from employees that being (or feeling) seen and heard by leaders is often a challenge. What do you notice about your own habits and the ways in which you are present (or not) to your employees? Two concrete places to look are the ways you focus your attention with your employees and your listening practices. Challenge yourself to be fully present to your employees, listening with all your attention and see what happens.

Lead with heart — When it comes to leading others, your competence as a leader plays a role. However, that's not enough. Employees also want to know you care about them and are willing to put your heart in it. They want to know you're prepared to get to know them and what they're good at, as well as support their growth. They also want to know that you will be open, honest and real with them — and invite the same in return. This is a process that over time can help to build mutual respect and trust. The work to be done matters but your relationships with the people you lead matter more.

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Feature continued

Celebrate failure and success — When it's safe to fail, employees are far more likely to try a new approach or something they've not previously tackled. Either way, there's an opportunity for the stretch that leads to learning followed by increased capacity, confidence and growth. Leaders who celebrate failure as well as success foster a climate of safety and trust, a condition guaranteed to bring out the best in all.

What does it all add up to?

Whether you are just starting out, growing as a leader or ready to accelerate your leadership difference, the work you do bringing out the best in those you lead can pay huge dividends. Give yourself a head start with a development mindset. When you follow through by leading in ways that enable the success of those you lead, watch your employees soar. The more you do it, the more you may discover what many accomplished leaders have already learned. It becomes some of the most satisfying work you will ever do as well as the most effective! A winning strategy for all.

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