

Leadership From the Heart

By Kerry Elam

Who do you think of as pivotal leaders from the past? Who presently stands out? What qualities do these leaders have? Who has been most influential to you as a leader in your career?

By asking these questions, you will determine what resonates with you in regards to leadership. Different qualities will stand out for each of us. Leaders such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa and Thomas Jefferson all possess the quality of leading from their heart. They were not worried about what others might think as they felt their focus on others rights and feelings was most important.

As Thomas Jefferson said, "The glow of one warm thought is to me worth more than money." To lead, you must allow yourself to make decisions based on how you feel and take into consideration impacts decisions might have on your employees. Being profitable is important –yet focusing on your employee's well-being is critical to your success.

The remainder of this article will provide some key principles incorporating lessons learned from leadership books.

Principles

Leading an organization or a team is a huge responsibility as you have others career's in your hands. Also, as a team member, you have a key role as your actions and tone will be followed by others. It is just like when you sneeze and someone sneezes, attitudes can be contagious. When going through your day, take a moment to see how you can improve upon implementing these principles. Remember, it is a practice as all we do in life....practice leads to perfection.

- **Accountability.** In the book, Leadership and Self Deception by the Arbinger Institute it defines being in the box as, "having self-deception – the inability to see that one has a problem and that everyone has a problem." By taking accountability for each situation versus blaming others, you promote everyone to work towards the collective good of the team, not individual accomplishments.
- **Treat others as people.** This goes back to basic principles we learned as children, do unto others as you would have them to you. Be reasonable in all your dealings and ensure you are looking at the big picture.
- **Be self-aware.** In the book, The Psychology of Winning, self-awareness is the first trait mentioned. It states, "Winners are more aware. Winners are honest. Positive self-awareness is self-honesty. You are a winner when what you think, what you feel, and what you do are nearly consistent." Knowing how you react and deal with situations can provide insight and guide you to making the best decisions and having the most rewarding interactions with others.
- **Take time to understand** by listening to what others are saying. An activity to try is to pair up with a co-worker and each person takes turn talking for three minutes. The person listening has

to stay engaged without saying any words. Then you switch roles. You can gain a better understanding of the importance of really listening. Many times, we interject with our examples and how we feel about a situation without fully listening and understanding what the other person has to say.

- **Have compassion** for what the other person may be going through on a personal level or even dealing with stressful work deadlines. Put yourself in the others shoes when interacting to see their side.

These principles will help you to build an environment in which you want to be a part of as you are allowing your team to be accountable for their role and they will know you value their efforts and they can be honest with you as you will listen to what they are saying. The key is to ensure everyone knows you are truly listening and care.

Books

There are many leadership books on the market, the books below are more based on the attitude you are bringing to work. It goes back to the leaders that stand out at the beginning. As Mother Teresa always said, “let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.” That means anyone that you come in counter with from your barista to your star employee to your significant other.

Book	Author	Key Lesson
Conscious Capitalism	John Mackey, Raj Sisodia	Written by Co-CEO of Whole Foods shares their model of the concept of Conscious Capitalism. It states, “Better leaders = Better world. The quality of our leaders affects the quality of our lives. Every good leader contributes in ways, big and small, toward making the world a better place – one day, one life, and one company at a time.” They also define the key qualities of a leader to be trust, accountability, caring, transparency, integrity, loyalty, and egalitarianism.
Leadership and Self-Deception, Getting Out of the Box	The Arbinger Institute	A story that reminds us to be accountable for our actions and to treat people as people and understand what everyone is dealing with on a daily basis. You are the only one that makes you feel a certain way. Nobody else makes you feel bad.
Man’s Search for Meaning	Viktor Frankl	Individuals can get through any situation with a positive outlook. Frankl was in a Nazi concentration camp and was able to survive by maintaining an attitude of gratitude and positive thinking.
The Power of Full Engagement	Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz	Provides examples of being fully engaged in all that you do. For instance, they denote the full engagement principles as being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance • Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related dimensions of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual • Because energy capacity diminishes with both overuse

Book	Author	Key Lesson
		and underuse, we must learn to balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build capacity, we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do • Positive energy rituals – highly specific routines for managing energy – are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance.
The Psychology of Winning	Dr. Denis Waitley	Denotes the 10 qualities of a winner are positive self – awareness, esteem, control, motivation, expectancy, image, direction, discipline, dimension and projection.

In summary, working towards a common goal together as a team is the key to success. You do not have to be the boss to be a leader as we all make contributions daily to those around us. Be mindful of judgments and take time to see the entire situation. Take accountability for your role at all times. Stop before you get caught up in talking about others. Work as a team towards your common goals. Eleanor Roosevelt said, “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

Bio

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