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Leadership

Volume 1

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What is a Leader?

Kevin Dwyer

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Leaders are not people who have authority over others. Leaders are not people who subscribe to the tens or hundreds of leadership models as their modus operandi of working. Leaders are not a select group of people with traits handed down through heredity.

Leaders are not even those people who do the right things versus the manager who does things right.

Simply, a leader has followers.

Beyond that definitions of a leader are too broad, too obtuse and the attributes sound too much like a cross between a religious icon and a comic book hero or a cross between a militaristic person and a romanticised version of an elite sportsman to be of use to people aspiring to be leaders.

The types of people I have seen in the community and in business who have been successful leaders, as determined by their followers, have had a wide variety of traits.

Some have been women who regard themselves as a “housewife”, who have taken and excelled at leading a choir, a committee or a club.

Some have been business people with a mastery of a rather technical topic.

Some have been charismatic and of high moral character and some have been charismatic and of a moral character that many have judged to be low.

Some have been strong and lead “from the front”. Some have been quiet yet questioning and preferred to enable their followers to achieve.

What defined them as having been a successful leader are the actions of their followers.

The leaders I have observed have been able to influence groups of people to do things to achieve a result in a more cohesive manner than they would have without the leader present.

Three elements are common to the disparate array of leaders I have observed.

- Trust
- Self-awareness
- Accountability

They have had the trust of the followers. Trust has come in many guises. Through a respect for the leader's humanity, a sense of discipline through a command and control structure, a respect for their knowledge of a subject matter and at times, something approaching the notion of celebrity status.

Trust, in all cases, has been built through an understanding of the needs of the followers. The common thread of the followers has been that they are the people required to get the job done.

It is not the case that the needs of all of the people in the organisation or community have been understood, just enough of those with the skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

Leaders do not have universal following. Far from it, in many cases the level in intensity of loyalty of followers is matched by an equally intense dislike by others. Leaders do not need to lead for “all of the people” in all circumstances.

Self-awareness contributed greatly to those leaders who succeeded over the longest period of time. The leaders who maintained a consistent following even after changing roles in a community or jobs in an organisation or even to a different organisation always understood themselves.

They have understood their limitations and character flaws. This did not stop them being leaders. They did not need to be a comic book hero with every positive virtue man has espoused.

What they did do was to surround themselves with good people that they trusted and to whom they were willing to delegate responsibility, especially in their areas of weakness.

Taking responsibility for their own actions and accountability for their subordinate's actions was common to only the best. These leaders were the ones that lasted the longest through the worst times and the best times in many

different roles and many different organisations.

To summarise, for me, three things determine how many people will follow an individual, for how long, to what level of loyalty:

- The level of mutual trust developed through understanding the necessary follower's needs
- The level of honest own appraisal of the leader's strengths and weaknesses and the willingness to allow others to help overcome the weaknesses through delegation
- The ability and desire of the leader to accept responsibility for their actions and accountability for their follower's actions

Learning to be a leader is a lesson in trial and error. A journey of trying, succeeding and failing that enables the individual to see:

- The patterns of actions that build trust
- The weaknesses they thought were strengths and the strengths they thought were weaknesses
- The patterns of circumstance that will determine when strengths are truly strengths and weaknesses are truly weaknesses
- The powerful message of character behind accepting responsibility and accountability

Leaders are only ordinary people doing things that ordinary people will follow.

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Kevin is the founder of Change Factory, a company which helps organisations who do not like their business outcomes get better outcomes through changing people's behaviour. To find out more about Change Factory and see more articles visit <http://www.changefactory.com.au>

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Overcome Your Fear of Public Speaking

Judith Pearson

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"I'm presenting to the shareholders meeting next week and I'm terrified of speaking to groups! Please help me!"

As a counselor and coach specializing in phobias and stress management, I often hear pleas like this one. For many people, public speaking anxiety is very real and very debilitating---posing a detriment to career advancement or to marketing your business.

One way to beat speaking anxiety is to join Toastmasters International. This non-profit organization, founded in 1924, offers a first-rate educational program for speaking and leading with confidence. Toastmasters has helped millions over their platform jitters. You can join the organization through a local club, where you'll find friendly people who have "been there." Toastmasters International has 8700 clubs in over 70 countries. If you can't find a nearby club, Toastmasters International will help you start one in your community or corporation. For more information go to <http://toastmasters.org>.

Confidence alone doesn't make a good speaker. Polished speaking skills come from knowing your subject matter, organizing the material, and practicing your delivery. Toastmasters gives a supportive atmosphere where you can put these skills to work.

I work with my clients on the emotional end of things—overcoming fear and anxiety. Drawing on professional training in Neuro-Linguistic Programming and hypnotherapy, and my own experiences as a speaker and trainer, I use a combination of coaching, relaxation training, mental rehearsal, and guided imagery to help people replace fear with confidence and motivation. Obviously, I can't show you these methods in this article. However, I can give you some easy-to-follow stratagems that should make your next speech a bit easier. Here are ten ways to overcome your fear of public speaking.

1. Give up believing that you have to be perfect.

People fear public speaking because of the embarrassment of making mistakes in front of others. Anxiety over mistakes only makes mistakes more likely. Having anxiety could be the biggest mistake of all! Even professional speakers

occasionally make mistakes. The difference is that they don't consider mistakes major obstacles to success. The secret is to accept that mistakes are going to happen sometimes, and develop the ability to recover from them quickly. Dr. L. Michael Hall, author of *Secrets of Personal Mastery*, advises, "Give yourself permission to be gloriously fallible!" To recover from a mistake, observe it dispassionately, take whatever corrective action is appropriate, regain your composure, focus on what to say next, and get on with it. Dwelling on an error and feeling bad only adds to your confusion. Leave the mistake behind and move forward.

You can't please everyone in your audience. Sure—some listeners may think you are a moron for making a mistake. Some won't even notice it. Others may admire the way you recover so easily. Some may be relieved to know you are human. Some couldn't care less.

Mistakes provide excellent feedback for improvement. Mistakes often promote single-trial learning, so it's almost certain you'll never make the same mistake twice. Ask yourself "What is the worst that can happen if I make a mistake during this speech?" Mistakes do not carry a death sentence.

2. Visualize the outcome you intend

People who fear public speaking visualize their upcoming speeches as abysmal failures. They see themselves fumbling clumsily with notes, stammering, turning red, possibly crying, horrifying audiences with their stupidity, and slinking away to live out the remainder of their miserable lives in exile, reviled as a social reject. Psychologists call this method of preparation "negative anticipation."

STOP IT! Each time you engage in this mental flagellation, shake yourself out of it. Say "STOP" loudly to yourself. Get your mind out of the failure trap. Sing, whistle, recite poetry, walk around the block, or talk to a friend. You can even make those scary images seem silly and laughable, by imagining your audience in clown costumes, or visualizing past failures backward in fast motion.

In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Steven Covey tells his readers to "begin with the end in mind." Visualize yourself giving that speech the way you intend to. If you anticipate success, you are more likely to get it. Mentally rehearse that you are speaking confidently with a smooth delivery to an appreciative audience. Hear the words coming out of your mouth in a flowing cadence. See yourself with an erect posture, breathing freely and

easily. By visualizing this way, you are programming your mind and body for positive results.

3. Prepare Positively

Stop worrying about yourself and get excited about your subject! You have something to say and others want to hear it. If you can, pick a subject you enjoy. Speak on topics you know well. Even if you're delivering dreary statistics about last year's crop failure, put something lively into your speech. Include an anecdote, or a quotation. Bring in the human interest perspective. Practice and preparation are easier if your subject matter is meaningful and/or enjoyable to you. If you think your material is interesting, your audience will catch your enthusiasm and appreciate your sincerity.

4. Love your listeners

Once, just before I was about to speak to classroom of 70 students, a colleague asked me, "How can you be so confident will all those people judging you and finding fault with you?" Now there is a defeatist presupposition, if I ever heard one! It had never even occurred to me to think in that way! "I feel confident," I answered, "because I assume my audiences are friendly. I assume they are here because they are interested in what I have to say. I love my audiences and I assume they love me." You get back what you put out---and nowhere is this adage more true than in public speaking. If you want your audiences to like you, you have to like them first.

5. Put the past behind you---at least the ugly parts

Some people have speaking anxiety because of a humiliating incident of the past---often in childhood. Such events can be highly traumatizing for children (and not a joyride for adults, either) and can cause life-long, paralyzing fear. If such an incident is the basis of your fear, visit a therapist or counselor who specializes in phobias. Phobias are nothing to be ashamed of. Researchers estimate that 80% of of us have at least one in a lifetime. Contrary to popular belief, many phobias can be cured, usually in three or four therapy sessions. Remember: All good speakers started out as not-so-good speakers. They improved because they resolved to do better the next time.

6. Get some rest and avoid hassles

Plan ahead and get a good night's sleep before your presentation. If you have trouble falling asleep, drink some warm milk (yes, it does work), and think

pleasant, relaxing thoughts. It may help to listen to a relaxation tape or soft music, or do some light reading before going to sleep. If you can, clear your calendar of stressful events that could interfere with your ability to concentrate and speak confidently and sincerely. In other words, don't schedule a job interview, a dentist visit, or a meeting with your ex-spouse's lawyer on the same day you are going to deliver that all-important speech!

7. Avoid mood-altering substances

Some people mistakenly think that drinking lots of coffee or alcohol, smoking cigarettes or popping a tranquilizer before speaking will improve their delivery. They do it to pep up or calm down. Mood-altering substances are an emotional crutch you don't need. The problem is that you can't regulate the dosage. You don't know how much is too much. Once it is in your bloodstream, there is little you can do about it. Your relaxation may turn to sluggishness. Your pep may turn to jitters. It's best to avoid these substances altogether.

Eat lightly, or not at all, one hour before speaking. A full stomach can lower your energy level and concentration, because your body is busy digesting food. Any nervousness can make digestion difficult. You don't want a belch or a gurgling stomach interrupting your speech!

8. Look your best

Take care with your appearance. Polish your shoes and comb your hair. Wear attractive, flattering, professional-looking clothing. When you look good, you feel confident. If you aren't sure what looking good is all about, do what professional speakers do. Meet with an image consultant to learn what colors and styles look best on you. Women can get personalized advice on hair and make-up. A good image consultant can tell you how to look fantastic without spending a fortune.

9. Remember to breathe

Anxiety tightens the muscles in the chest and throat. With a restricted airway and insufficient oxygen, your voice can come out as a squeak! Deep breathing, on the other hand, sends oxygen to the lungs and brain and expands the throat and chest, promoting relaxation. As you approach the platform, take a deep breath and relax.

10. Focus on friendly faces

While speaking, maintain eye contact with your listeners. Find friendly faces and focus on them. Smiles and approving nods will give you extra encouragement.

Final Words....

It's ironic that some people are more afraid of public speaking than of driving on the highways. Yet, vastly more casualties and fatalities result from traffic accidents than from public speaking. Fear is a natural survival mechanism. It can motivate us, or stop us in our tracks. In situations that pose a threat to life and limb, fear motivates us to be careful. On the other hand, fear is a problem when it interferes with our goals and achievements. These ten tips will help you progress toward confidence on the platform. Ultimately we succeed when we conduct ourselves according to the rewards we want, rather than the things we fear.

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10 Ways to Beef up Your Leadership Skills

Megan Tough

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Have you ever heard someone say, “Actually, I have to admit that I think I am really bad at managing other people. My staff all hate me and I'm incapable of doing my job”.

The answer is no, of course. No one says this either because they don't believe it, or because they don't want to appear incompetent. Unfortunately research tells us that from the employees' perspective, there aren't that many terrific managers out there.

What should we take out of this dichotomy? Perhaps at the least, we could all admit to ourselves that there is room for some improvement in the way we lead others. After all, it's not the sort of skill that is easy to get 100% right all of the time. It might just be that we don't specifically know what improvements to make, so here's 10 ways to start:

1. Get a reality check.

Finding out what others think of our leadership style can be real eye-opener, and is often the most powerful driver for change. Using a 360 survey where you receive feedback from your staff, peers and manager, gives you some concrete information on a sometimes intangible subject. Use an existing tool (and there are some highly regarded ones out there) or else simply let your staff know that you are seeking feedback from them in order to improve your style.

A word of caution though, your staff may not feel safe in giving feedback if they believe you are going to use it against them, or become defensive about what they say. It's up to you to create a safe environment so they feel comfortable in being open and honest with you.

2. Don't use the power of your position to get things done.

If people are questioning why certain things are done, or the logic of decisions, never pull rank in response. A critical component of effective leadership is getting the buy-in from your team and colleagues. You don't get buy-in by telling them that the decision is the right one because you are the boss and you made it. Your team may not always agree with what is being done, but they are

more likely to respect you if you take the time to explain your rationale.

3. Don't think of employees as things that need to be controlled or managed.

Instead, give them the latitude to take actions and make decisions. Trust is a vital component of leadership. If you can't trust people to do their jobs well, then you either have the wrong people in the jobs, or you have the right people but you haven't trained them sufficiently. Let them do what they are there to do, without leaning over their shoulders all the time, or demand to know how they spend each minute of their time.

4. Listen, listen listen.

If there are unhappy or disgruntled people in your business, you can guarantee that at some stage they've tried to tell you what the problem is. It's likely you weren't listening (or didn't want to listen), or perhaps your initial reaction made the person think twice about bringing the problem to you. Truly listening is one of the greatest skills to develop, regardless of your role. Good listeners are genuinely interested, convey empathy, and want to find out what's behind the conversation. Great leaders are great listeners -without exception.

5. Stop providing solutions.

Managers often achieve their positions after being technical specialists, and so will have an opinion or view on how to "fix" situations or problems. They believe that it's faster to tell someone what to do, or do it themselves, than give their employees an opportunity to figure it out. By always providing the answers, managers take away opportunity for their employees to learn and come up with alternative (and potentially better) ways of doing things.

6. Always be constructive - always.

Language and communication skills set great leaders apart from mediocre ones. Don't patronise or be critical of others - take complete responsibility for how you are heard. If you catch yourself about to make negative remarks, take a breath and rephrase your words to get your message across without the emotional attachment. Great leaders always find a way to say things calmly and constructively.

7. Judge your success by the success of your team.

The true success of a leader can be measured by the success of the people that

work for them. As a manager of others, your prime responsibility is to ensure the success and development of your team. If they are successful, you will automatically be successful. Focus on building their skills and removing obstacles in their way. If you can achieve this, you will see the results in the productivity, motivation and satisfaction of your employees. This in turn filters through to bottom-line results.

8. Don't do things just because they will “look good”.

Nothing is more transparent than managers who make decisions and behave in ways simply to look good to their superiors. If you want to improve as a leader, one of the qualities you need is integrity. The integrity to make decisions because they are right, and the integrity to stand up when you truly believe something is not in the best interests of the business. Whether or not it is in your personal best interests is much less of a consideration.

9. Include humour in your diet.

Nobody likes to work in an environment that is devoid of any fun. People are more productive when they are enjoying themselves. Creating a workplace where fun is permitted and encouraged can make a significant difference, and it's even more effective when the boss participates. It increases team spirit, and encourages people to see you as a person, not simply as the boss.

10. Let people get to know the real you.

Being open about yourself helps to break down the barriers that hierarchy puts in place. When your employees know the person behind the façade, that's when you start to build the foundations of good leadership - trust and respect.

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10 Tips for Becoming a Great Boss

Wally Bock

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Here are ten tips that tell you what to do if you want to become a great boss. I've added a couple of bonus tips, as well.

1. **Manage behavior and performance.** Behavior is what people say and do. Performance is the measurable result of work. Forget about managing attitude. Forget about motivating others. Instead, use what you say and do to influence the behavior and performance of the people who work for you.
2. **Set clear expectations.** Your people can't do what you want if they're not clear about what you want. Learn to give good directions. Check for understanding.
3. **Set reasonable expectations.** Ideally, you want to set goals that force people to stretch just a little bit, but that are still within their grasp. Try to help your people grow through a series of small wins.
4. **Check on performance regularly.** That's the only way you'll know how people are doing. Check more frequently on people who are learning a task or who are doing it again after a long layoff. Check less frequently on people who have demonstrated their competence in a task.
5. **Give helpful feedback.** Do this in four steps. Describe the behavior in non-judgmental terms. Describe the outcome of the behavior. Pause and allow for subordinate reaction and comment. Then determine how things will be different the next time.
6. **Keep things interesting.** Workers won't stay engaged unless they find their work interesting. Sometimes the work itself has intrinsic interest. But, more often, the way to keep people interested is to help them keep learning and developing.
7. **Tell people why their work is important.** People want to be part of something that is bigger than they are. Tell them how their work contributes to the team and to team success. Tell them how the performance of the team contributes to the success of the company or how it helps achieve a big goal.

8. Describe and deliver the consequences of performance. Consequences are what happens to people because of their behavior or performance.

9. Positive consequences (like praise) encourage people to continue something new or difficult. Most managers don't use positive consequences enough. Positive consequences should be delivered frequently, but inconsistently. In other words, look for opportunities to praise behavior or performance, but don't praise every good thing you see.

10. Negative consequences (like punishment) encourage people to stop or avoid doing something. Negative consequences should be delivered consistently. In other words, if you tell a subordinate that a certain behavior or performance level will result in a negative consequence, make sure you deliver the consequence if it's justified.

11. Be fair. People perceive a workplace to be fair when consequences and performance match up. A trainee of mine once put this in quasi-Biblical terms: "The just should be rewarded and the unjust should be punished in accordance with their deeds."

12. Give your people the maximum control possible over their work life. Let them make as many basic decisions about their work life as is reasonable and possible. So, what's reasonable?

13. A worker who has the skill to do the job and who regularly pitches in to help (what we call an engaged worker) can be trusted to make more work decisions than a less experienced or less engaged worker. Match your willingness to grant freedom to the worker's ability and willingness to do the job.

Bonus Tip: Show up a lot. This is the single defining behavior of great supervisors. When you show up a lot you get to know your people and they get to know you. And every contact is an opportunity for you to coach, counsel, encourage, and correct.

Bonus Tip: Play the odds. You can't win them all in management or in life. But you can follow this advice from the American writer Ring Lardner. "The race may not always be to the swift, nor victory to the strong, but that's the way to bet."

There's good news and bad news here. Let's do the bad news first.

You can't win them all. No matter how good a job you do, there will be people who won't do what they're supposed to. There will be situations that don't work out well.

Now for the good news. If you do the basics consistently and well, over time you'll be the person with the greatest impact on a work team's productivity and morale. And that's something to feel really good about.

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About the Author :

Wally Bock is an author, speaker, consultant and coach who helps leaders improve the performance and morale of their teams. This material is adapted from Wally's latest book, Performance Talk: The One-on-One Part of Leadership (<http://www.performancetalk.com>). He also writes the Three Star Leadership Blog (<http://blog.threestarleadership.com/>). You'll also find tips and resources about all aspects of leadership at the Three Star Leadership site (<http://www.threestarleadership.com/>).

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Peers and Power Are a Potent Mix

Dr. Karen Otazo

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Have you ever walked into a high school locker room or a martial arts class? The smell that hits you is that of competition and sweat. In meeting rooms in organizations around the world, the dynamics, if not the aroma, are similar, as peers jockey for power in an adult version of sports competition.

It's no accident that on feedback questionnaires of all kinds, peers tend to mark each other below scores received from bosses and direct reports.

When you enter a leadership role, it's important to realize that the game has changed and your new peers may now see you as competition.

It's usually not personal. A certain amount of distrust is natural, because, now or in the future, you and your peers will be in direct competition for roles, resources, and remuneration. And it's okay, indeed healthy, to develop some caution regarding the motivation and moves of your peers. Otherwise, you could be in for a nasty surprise.

Consider Albert, who relied on another department's research and fact finding capabilities. He soon found that their reports could be biased and that they did not give his group enough information.

Frustrated, he openly complained about the research department and refused to continue using their reports. But Albert soon realized he was burning bridges with his actions. He backed off and approached the problem differently.

Using feedback gleaned from asking his clients what they thought, he let the research department know how the biases and omissions in their previous reports had upset his clients. When the emphasis was on serving clients, not helping a peer and possible competitor, the research department recognized and responded to the need to cooperate.

Given that resources are usually stretched and the interests of departments often don't coincide, developing trust with peers is tricky. Ideally, trust comes from knowing that a peer is able to put the organization's interests before his or her own, and will give credit to other departments rather than taking total ownership.

But don't take it for granted that a peer will always act this way. Establish clear guidelines and expectations for your work together. For instance, if you have to split a commission, agree on the percentage split in advance. And constantly monitor your joint efforts, giving quick feedback about what's working and what isn't if your peers' work diverges from the framework you set up.

In Albert's case, he found that providing clear guidelines and expectations backed by others was the first step in creating a good peer group relationship. He also learned that he had to communicate constantly with and test the research team to be sure they were working toward compatible goals.

Remember, a peer today may be a boss tomorrow. See keep it clean and keep it clear and you'll be happy that you did.

- Excerpted from the forth coming “The Truth About Being a Leader...And Nothing But The Truth”.

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Leadership: Why Won't They Do What They're Supposed to?

Wally Bock

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The people who work for you should do what they're supposed to do. But sometimes they don't. If you're the boss, you have to figure out what's going on and then fix the problem.

Start out by asking the person why he didn't do what you want. Do not get emotional. Do not get defensive. Even if you think what you hear is really dumb, remain calm.

Then analyze what you hear so you can take action to fix the problem. Remember that one of your objectives as a boss is to take away all your people's excuses for not doing what they're supposed to do. Here are some of the reasons you'll discover.

Maybe they don't know what you want them to do. They "should" know, but they often don't.

To fix this one, you have to make sure that your expectations are clear. Give your instructions in several different ways. Use active listening techniques to check for understanding.

Set clear expectations in four areas. Your subordinate should know what behavior or performance is expected. They should be clear about when it's expected. You should also make sure they understand how performance will be measured and what the consequences are of good and bad performance or behavior.

Maybe they don't think it's as important as other things. In today's overloaded world, this is a really common reason.

To fix this one, you need to make your priorities clear. Don't be surprised if your subordinate asks you: "What do you want me to not do so I can do this?" Be prepared to offer suggestions for how they can do everything they're supposed to.

If the task is a high priority one, set up an alarm system that will let you know

early if there's going to be a problem getting the work done. That way you can re-arrange things so commitments and goals are met.

There are two kinds of alarm systems. First there are performance milestones.

If your goal is something like mailing fifty marketing pieces a week, then you can set milestones for each day. At the end of Monday check performance. If the Monday milestone hasn't been met, find out why. Fix the problem.

The other kind of alarm system is telling your subordinate to alert you if they're going to have trouble meeting performance targets. This works best with confident workers who can make realistic estimates of how things are going. For others, use the milestone system.

Maybe they don't know how to do what you want. This happens surprisingly often. It's most likely to happen with people who are new on the job. But it can also happen with experienced workers who haven't done the specific task you want for quite a while.

This is a training issue. To fix the problem, show your subordinate how to do the job. Or send them off for training. Or have them shadow another worker who does the job well.

Maybe they don't have the resources to do what you want. Your expectations can be clear, but if your subordinate doesn't have the tools, time or budget to do the job, you've got a problem.

Fixing this one is simple, but it's not always easy. Make sure your subordinate has the resources he or she needs to do the job.

Maybe they're scared of the task. Hardly anyone talks about this, but it happens all the time. Your subordinate might be worried about physical injury. He or she may fear embarrassment or ridicule or failure.

To fix this problem, ease your subordinate into the task. Give him or her lots of small wins. Step by safe step is the way to success.

Maybe, they choose not to do what you want. This is a tough one. Some people have the training and the resources and simply don't do what they're supposed to do.

There are a couple of keys to handling this situation well. First, give notice that

specific behavior or performance is unacceptable and that you're going to pay attention with notebook in hand.

Let him or her know that you will document their behavior. Let your subordinate know what the consequences will be of continued unacceptable performance or behavior.

Then do what you promise. Monitor behavior or performance. Deliver negative consequences for unacceptable performance. Use positive consequences to encourage the right behavior. Document your subordinate's performance, your meetings and agreements, and whatever consequences get delivered.

You'll find that most folks change their behavior as soon as you give them notice. Most of the rest will change after a negative consequence or two.

A small fraction will continue in their unacceptable ways. In those cases you will probably wind up delivering formal discipline or perhaps even terminating employment. But if that's the case, your good documentation will support the discipline or firing.

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About the Author :

Wally Bock is an author, speaker, consultant and coach who helps leaders improve the performance and morale of their teams. This material is adapted from Wally's latest book, Performance Talk: The One-on-One Part of Leadership <http://www.performancetalk.com>

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10 Tips on Learning to Lead

Wally Bock

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Leadership is an apprentice trade. In most apprentice trades, you learn about 20 percent in the classroom and from books. The rest, 80 percent, you learn on the job. Here are ten tips on how to do master your own apprenticeship.

Pick good role models. Pick out some great leaders to emulate. Then, when you're faced with a leadership problem, ask yourself how your role models would handle the situation.

Find a mentor or two or three. Mentors are people who provide wisdom and guidance. Mentors are the masters in your personal leadership apprentice program. A good mentor will enjoy helping you sort out your career and leadership challenges. You may have many mentors during your career.

Ask how you're doing. Good feedback is essential to efficient and effective growth. Ask your boss, your peers and the people who work for you how you're doing. Ask how you might do better.

Critique your own performance. Every time you take a significant leadership action, make sure you also do an after-action critique. Ask yourself what you wanted to accomplish, what you did, and how things came out. Decide what you'll do the same and differently next time.

Talk to other leaders. People who have been bosses for a while have had to deal with many leadership situations. Talk over your problems with them. Adapt their advice to your situation and your personal style.

Seek development opportunities. Development opportunities are assignments where you get to stretch yourself, learn new skills, gain new perspective and increase your visibility.

Take classes. Classes can give you new ideas or help you develop specific skills. Pick classes that give you solid take-away value. Sometimes you'll find that the take-away value lies in the relationships you establish or build with other class participants.

Read books. There are a lot of good ones out there, but there are a lot more that

don't have much to say. Consider reading history and the biographies of leaders to see how they did things. Read business books for content or because "everybody" is reading it. If you're not getting value from a book, stop reading.

Have a plan. You don't need a super-detailed, step-by-step, three-binder-filling plan. But you do need an idea of the direction you want to go and what your development priorities are.

Review regularly. That means review your plan and review your development. I suggest taking a little time every week to review how you're doing and growing. Take a little time at least every month to check your plan make sure it's still want you need.

You are the person who will determine what kind of leader you become. You are the person who will set direction, gather feedback and make course corrections. You are the person who will choose books and courses that will help you grow, and try to line up assignments that will help improve your skills, perspective, relationships, and visibility. And, you are the person who will reap the rewards.

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Wally Bock has been working with organizations to improve both productivity and morale for more than two decades. Wally is the author of Performance Talk (<http://www.performancetalk.com/>). He writes the Three Star Leadership blog (<http://blog.threestarleadership.com/>), coaches managers on success-building skills, and is a popular speaker to groups in North America and elsewhere.

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The Lonely Leader

Alan Cutler

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Managers today are working increasingly longer hours and, as a consequence, have less time for personal reflection; either on work or personal-related issues. Hence, an increasing number are realising the benefits of having someone who they spend time with to discuss issues and to benefit from experienced, specialist advice and guidance. In John's case, being self-employed, his mentor, albeit a hospitality professional, had no connection with his business. Yet many organisations, in all sectors, are now setting up formal mentoring arrangements whereby junior managers can call upon the guidance of more experienced colleagues from within their company.

Mentors are not consultants employed to resolve specific issues, nor are they life coaches whose role is to encourage their client to set and achieve personal goals. A mentor will act as a sounding board for their mentee and will walk alongside him or her to encourage career and personal development. The mentor's role is to support and develop; to stimulate and challenge. Having a mentor can help people who hold a leadership position develop their leadership skills for their own benefit, as well as for their teams and, hence, their organisation. Many people have found that the guidance they have received from a mentor has given them greater confidence in their jobs which has made a significant impact on their career prospects.

Mentoring has been described as:

'Off-line help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work and thinking'

Megginson and Clutterbuck 1995

'Off-line' in this definition refers to a relationship that is not with one's line manager. Having someone outside one's chain of command is seen as being potentially more beneficial, as it reduces the risk of conflict and lack of open discussion.

A mentor:mentee relationship should be seen as an on-going, medium-to-long term arrangement if it is to be of real benefit. It takes time for each party to get to know the other and, in particular, for the mentee to gain the necessary

confidence to enter open, often personal, discussions. Confidentiality is the bedrock of a productive relationship, with the mentor responding to the direction set by the mentee. Indeed, the junior partner should be encouraged and empowered to take increasing responsibility for the pace and direction the continuing discussions take, although the mentor should also challenge and coax the mentee to identify problem areas.

An open, positive mentoring relationship offers many potential benefits, including:

- ? addressing and resolving specific situations associated with the mentee's role
- ? building more constructive relationships within the workplace
- ? clarifying and prioritising work and personal choices
- ? gaining greater confidence and a feeling of self-worth
- ? improved career development potential
- ? developing better leadership skills founded upon greater confidence in the authority that accompanies a leader's role

It is obvious that if a mentoring relationship is to bear fruit, the mentee must be, or become, totally at ease with the advisor. There must be a chemistry between them whereby the mentee has total confidence in the mentor; whilst the mentor feels able to advise, direct, challenge and, if need be, constructively criticise the junior partner in the relationship. The ideal mentor should:

- ? have appropriate background knowledge - this may not necessarily be sector-specific, but must include a good level of managerial and leadership experience
- ? be able to build rapport and develop relationships, based upon mutual respect
- ? have a record of developing and motivating others
- ? be enthusiastic and interested in the mentee's role
- ? be a good communicator; not least a good listener
- ? not be directly related to the mentee's current position or chain of command.

A supportive mentor can have a very uplifting effect on a manager who has the ability but, for whatever reason, needs the encouragement and guidance from someone who shows faith in him or her, as evidenced from this comment:

“I was rather under-confident when I took up my current post. I was newly divorced and had been out of the top flight for a period of time. I was totally intimidated by the company ethos. My mentor encouraged me to perform beyond my job description. She would question my performance, explain my mistakes and advise me how to perform better. Above all, she gave me confidence. She would say “I know you have the ability to do it and I know that you will do it”. Her encouragement and faith in me was a great support and incentive”

Most mentoring relationships include regular, timetabled meetings, ideally away from the mentee's direct work environment. The initial meeting(s) are used to share personal information; address any concerns about the forthcoming relationship; and identify priorities and expectations held by both parties. Subsequent meetings, possibly held every month or so, will become more focussed upon specific issues as levels of confidence are built.

A fairly recent development, however, has been the increasing practice of e-mentoring, whereby meetings are largely, or entirely, replaced by communications over the internet. Whilst it may be more difficult to develop deeper relationships; and reactions and interpretations cannot be influenced by reading body language or verbal nuances, there are some positive benefits to e-mentoring, not least in combating problems of distance and international time zones. Moreover, the mentor can spend longer considering issues and offering advice, whilst the mentee also has more time to reflect on exchanges. Issues are addressed more promptly than by awaiting a monthly meeting, whilst discussions can be spread over several days rather than being confined within, say, a two-hour meeting. Perhaps, however, the best mentoring arrangement allows for a combination of face-to-face contact and telephone/email communications.

Yet, how often do leaders allocate substantial resources towards the training of their staff, whilst giving scant consideration to their own development needs? A senior position within any organisation can, indeed, be a lonely and, on some occasions, a cold place. You may have nobody to share concerns with or bounce ideas off; or you may feel that seeking guidance from your manager may be interpreted as a weakness. But you do not have to be a Billy No Mates - consider the benefits of having a mentor!

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Leadership; Its a Matter of Trust

Kevin Dwyer

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Leadership of organisations is not for the faint hearted. It can be a difficult and lonely place at times. This is particularly so if the leader does not have a supportive team. However, the lack of a supportive team is probably as good an indicator as any, that leadership skills are lacking.

It is not enough for leaders to say, "Follow me, I know the way". They must be able to convince their teams by their actions, not just their words, that they do indeed know the way.

That is not to say that leaders need to have their teams always accepting what they are advocating is right. What they must have is the trust of their teams. Trust is a central element of leadership.

A study by the Hay Group found there is a clear link between employee satisfaction and the trust held by the top leadership. In examining over 75 key components of employee satisfaction it found that trust and confidence in the leadership of an organisation was the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organization. Trust can be characterized three ways.

The first is a trust based on fear of reprisal. The strength of this kind of trust is when the trust is broken and the consequence is clear, known and imposed. Examples of this kind of trust include the new manager and the employee where the trust comes through the authority of the position. Another example is in the form of contracts with legal consequences. This is the most fragile kind of trust.

Knowledge based trust relies on a history of interaction, relying on information rather than deterrence. Penalties, legal consequences and contracts are replaced by predictable behaviours as the basis of trust. If the behaviour becomes inconsistent, trust is not necessarily broken. When explanations for changes in behaviour can be explained trust is usually maintained.

The third and most enduring trust is based on an emotional connection between the parties. Trust exists because the parties understand each others needs, wants and intentions. Either party can in effect, act as an agent for the other. At this level of trust, controls are minimal.

Leadership styles can be categorised in innumerable ways. A useful category for demonstrating how different levels of trust interact with leadership style is to consider leadership as authoritarian, participative or delegative.

An authoritarian style of leader tells their subordinates what they want done and how they want it done, without getting the advice of their subordinate.

To be able to carry off this style over long periods of time and maintain trust, leaders need to have trust built from their demonstrated superior knowledge of the organisation's business.

Some people seem to think that this style also includes yelling, using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abuse of power. This is not the authoritarian style...it is an abusive, unprofessional style of leadership.

A participative style involves the leader including one or more subordinates in the decision making process, determining what to do and how to do it. However, the leader maintains the final decision-making authority.

This style relies heavily on a trust built on knowledge of the predictability of what individuals will do and uses checkpoints to verify that the predictable action has occurred.

A delegative style allows the employees to make the decision. However, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This is used when employees are able to analyse the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it.

This style relies almost completely on the trust that comes from an emotional connection.

Leaders demonstrate too often, however, their lack of understanding of the interrelationship between their leadership style and the trust they need to develop. New managers come to an organisation, the business of which they do not understand, and practice an authoritarian style with experienced subordinates.

They lose the trust of their position quickly.

Experienced managers with detailed and insightful knowledge of an organisation's business, attempt to practice a delegative style with an

inexperienced or underperforming team, when a participative or even authoritarian style would have been better.

Experienced leaders practice the one leadership style with subordinates with different levels of experience and maturity. They use, say, a participative style with a university graduate new into the organisation. If the subordinate fails the task in terms of quality or time, the question of, “Who is at fault?” should find an answer - “The leader”, who should have used an authoritarian style.

Leadership requires trust. Trust can come from position, but is more enduring when it comes from predictability and even more enduring when it comes from respect between the leader and the subordinate.

Leaders of organisations who do not engender respect and give respect will find leadership a very lonely place.

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Kevin Dwyer is the founder of Change Factory. Change Factory helps organisations who do not like their business outcomes to get better outcomes by changing people's behaviour. Businesses we help have greater clarity of purpose and ability to achieve their desired business outcomes. To learn more or see more articles visit <http://www.changefactory.com.au> or email kevin.dwyer@changefactory.com.au ©2006 Change Factory

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How Real Women Get Ahead

Judith Lindenberger

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Forget what you heard about “being one of the boys,” “having it all,” and “going for the jugular.” Here is how real women get ahead.

Get In Line

According to Catalyst's 2002 Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners, women fill less than ten percent of line positions held by corporate officers and just 5.2% of top earners at Fortune 500 companies are women. Is there a correlation? Absolutely. Half of women executives and 68% of CEOs say that lack of significant line experience “holds women back” (Catalyst, Women in U.S. Corporate Leadership, 2003).

Knowing that line experience is critical, get prepared. Study financial management, become an expert in a functional area such as strategic planning, manufacturing, marketing or sales, serve on a nonprofit or advisory board and, the minute the opportunity arises, take a position with profit and loss responsibility.

Learning about the financials doesn't happen overnight. When Margaret Morford, 50, of Brentwood, Tennessee, was Vice President of Human Resources for a large distribution company, she recalls, “I took the same finance for non-financial managers course three times until I got it. I used that financial knowledge to demonstrate Human Resources' impact to the bottom line. Once I started speaking in numbers, the senior managers in my peer group began to view Human Resources as a business partner rather than an administrative drain on revenues.”

Remember Who You Are

In 2005, The Center for Work/Life Policy asked women what they want in the workplace. Seventy-nine percent of women said “the freedom to be myself at work.” Ask a man if he desires to “be himself at work,” and you will probably get the same glassy stare I got when I asked my husband that question. But when I asked women leaders, I heard stories like the one my friend, Pam Judd, age 53, shared. Shortly after she began working for Levi's, Pam was advised by her boss and peers that if she wanted to get ahead, she shouldn't be so nice. The

essential Pam is a very nice person – caring, empathetic, someone who remembers every event in her friends' and family's lives with a card or a phone call. Pam ignored that early advice, made the decision to be herself, and stayed the course. Now, 33 years later, she is a sales director, one of the top female leaders in her company, and still nice.

Communicate Superbly

Almost fifty percent of women executives cite “developing a style with which male managers are comfortable” as critical to success (Catalyst, Women in U. S. Corporate Leadership, 2003).

Dr. Pat Heim, author of *Invisible Rules: Men, Women and Teams*, writes “women often use hedges, disclaimers and tag questions in their speech to involve the other person and maintain the all-important relationship in female culture. When men hear this, they incorrectly assume a woman either does not know what she is talking about, or that she is insecure about her ideas.”

Lisa Steiner, age 46, Vice President, Brown-Forman Corporation, Louisville, Kentucky, says “In my experience, women who regularly ask for advice and are tentative are viewed as needy – not the best perception if your goal is to reach the top.” Steiner adds, “It has taken me years to refine my decision-making skills but now I have learned not to second guess myself.”

Flaunt Your Skills Not Your Sexuality

Maria Xenidou, age 35, Senior Associate, National Starch & Chemical Company, Bridgewater, New Jersey, follows the advice of a mentor who told her never to answer a senior person's query, “How are you?” with “Fine.” Instead, she says, “I give a one sentence update on what I am working on or a recent challenge I mastered. By doing so, I keep upper management up-to-date about my career and what might have been a quick hello in the hall often turns into a longer conversation.”

And, highly successful women know not to flirt, swear or be the last one at the bar. A 2005 study by Tulane University found that women who send flirtatious e-mail, wear short skirts, cross their legs provocatively or massage a man's shoulders at work win fewer pay raises and promotions.

You Can't Have It All If You Do It All

The biggest hurdle that women have to leap is managing kids and a career.

While men also have busy professional and personal lives, women shoulder the majority of household and child care responsibilities and pay the career consequences. According to Catalyst, *Workplace Flexibility Isn't Just a Woman's Issue*, 2003, women are more likely than men to:

- ? Employ outside services for domestic help
- ? Share personal responsibilities with a partner
- ? Use childcare services
- ? Rely on supportive relatives other than their partner
- ? Curtail personal interests

Successful women plan their careers and don't attempt to do it all. Steiner is married with four children at home. She started her family after completing her education and making a mark in her organization. Says Steiner, "I don't attempt to do it all. I delegate a lot of the household chores to make our lives work."

Honor The Female Advantage

In *Fast Company*, *Women and Men, Work and Power*, February 1998, Sharon Patrick, President and COO, Martha Stewart Living, is quoted as saying, "We can't ignore a million years of history – at the office or in the living room. Men hunt, women gather." A funny but true attribute of the modern hunter is "going for the jugular and then inviting you out for a beer afterwards."

According to Nicki Joy and Susan Kane-Benson, authors of *Selling is a Woman's Game*, women tend to encourage harmony and agreement, consult with experts, employees and peers before making a decision, and make personal connections with others at work.

As more organizations move away from authoritarian values and a rigid hierarchy to a more open, informal, democratic model, "being raised as a man is no longer an advantage" says John Naisbitt, author of *Megatrends*. I agree. What do you think?

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