

How to Lead at Any Level

Practices to put into place no matter your position

- You need to believe you are a leader.
 - Leadership is a practice not a position. How many people have seen people in leadership positions who are not good leaders?
 - There is no magic in this. You don't need strength finders to tell you this. You don't need to check off an evaluation criteria. You don't need a "leadership role" to officially announce you are a leader. You don't need someone to tell you at evaluation time based on criteria. You just need to declare you are a leader and commit to a practice.
- You need to have a POV.
 - Leaders are guided by a philosophy, values, principles, beliefs that they have defined. They demonstrate conviction and consistency in these. But there is a difference between sounding like a broken record that everyone dismisses and getting someone's attention:
 - What gets attention: data, examples, test-and-learn, benefits the entire pie (not just your slice), solution oriented, options, case studies
 - What gets dismissed: sand-bagging, dart throwers, alienation (take my ball and go home), black/white scenarios, running agendas, lack of flexibility
 - As you shift from a doer to a manager, your POV should also shift. In fact, when you can start thinking about the business as a whole versus just your piece of the pie, people start to shift you in their own minds.
- You need to have followers.
 - You can't be a leader if nobody is following. Strategically enroll others up, down and across. There is an art to this. And it involves finding ways to build mutually beneficial relationships. We are all humans, we need other humans to achieve our goals, dreams, objectives. You need to find ways to enroll others and here is the trick...they need to see value in it for them as well.
 - Very tactical ways of doing this which are very situational. But the objective here is "How can I get this other human to help me pursue my POV?" Here is a quick cheat sheet of the most common value drivers:
 - Enrolling those that are above you: make them look good, make more money for them/business, grow the business.
 - Sideways: Benefit us all...the pie is worth more than each of the individual pieces, shared reward/incentive, quid-pro-quo.
 - Down: Reputation, credibility, visibility
- Test-and-learn your leadership practice.
 - Leadership isn't something you achieve and then you get to coast. That is the position mindset. Too much changes everyday. There is new data, new situations, new environments, new people which means you will need to flex your leadership style to accommodate. You will need to test-and-learn which inherently means, not everything is going to go the way you expected all the time. Some common pitfalls women face here (which we wish someone had told us):
 - Can't be wrong/change your mind - it takes a lot of vulnerability to change your mind. But sticking to your guns when you are wrong just ruins your rep. There are ways of doing this without seeming wishy-washy. Don't let this lead to an inability to make a decision just to avoid being wrong. Share the risk instead.
 - Refuse to self-promote - the work does not speak for itself. But you don't need to be the sleazy ego driven credit-taker either. It does mean using "I" when appropriate.
 - Take feedback personally unless it is personal. As women, we tend to make a lot of things personal (i.e. the work) because we invest so much of ourselves into it. This means being able to hear feedback. It is also a big reason why women don't help others to rise...Alpha female.
 - Let empathy erode your reputation. Women can tend to over-index in this characteristic, which means that sometimes we can be taken advantage of. Which can impact our own credibility and reputation.
 - Don't leverage relationships...Because women are relational in nature, we are more focused on making friends. And that everyone likes. Sometimes fail to see the strategic opportunity of the value exchange. But just like you wouldn't give away your products for free, you should expect some level of value reciprocity that has nothing to do about whether the person likes you, appreciates you, etc.
 - Even if your PB defies some of these, you can still become more aware and become better through practice.

