

"Leaders don't create followers...they create more leaders"

Too many old-fashioned leaders measure their influence by the number of followers that they can claim. According to Tom Peters, the greatest leaders are those who don't look for followers. Think of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi or Nelson Mandela. They were trying to create more leaders in order to help many others to find and create their own destinies.

So, how do you create more leaders? One of my CEO clients has been working on helping his team of vice presidents become better leaders. He is inspiring, challenging and always expects (and usually gets) the best from his team. He says he is in the business of creating leaders. Here are some of his tips:

- ❑ Lead by example – People take their cues from the leader. It is critically important to live the values that you espouse. In other words, be authentic.
- ❑ When you have made a mistake, own up to it.
- ❑ Notice acts of leadership by people that you work with and say thank you
- ❑ Celebrate the achievements of others every chance you get
- ❑ Encourage others to put their ideas forward and defend them
- ❑ Listen twice as much as you talk
- ❑ Stay available and accessible for people to discuss both problems and solutions with you
- ❑ Encourage people to challenge you and your ideas, and praise them for doing so
- ❑ Facilitate, don't preach
- ❑ Give clear and helpful feedback to everyone

Learning to give and receive feedback is critically important for leaders. A colleague recently told me that no leader should expect his/her staff to give him/her honest feedback! And, while I agree that the higher your position in the workplace, the more difficult people find it to give feedback, withholding honest observations about how behavior affects us insulates leaders from receiving powerful information to help them get even better. In my work, I often help leaders learn how to give effective positive feedback first, then learn apply the same tools to giving feedback about areas to improve upon.

Here are some tips for giving complimentary feedback.

Be direct. Relaying a compliment through a third party may seem better than nothing, but is it going to have the desired effect? Not really. To offer a meaningful compliment, make sure you talk directly to the person you're complimenting. Don't say something nice about someone to his coworkers or praise him in a meeting that he's not in. Compliments have more power when they're delivered directly to the person, preferably in front of other people.

Be specific. Merely saying, "Hey, you did a great job in that meeting last week" may sound nice, but in practical terms, it is a fairly worthless remark. The problem is that the person you're talking to has no idea what he did that impressed you or how she made a difference. Give as much information as you can about why you're pleased and what effect the person's actions have had on the larger picture.

Be non-attributive. It's better to tell someone how her good deeds or work affected you, rather than telling her what kind of person you think she is. You shouldn't presume to define someone (even in a flattering light), and personal assessments are just that -- personal. Instead of saying, "I appreciate what a thoughtful person you are," try saying, "I appreciate the way you took time to fill me in on that meeting I missed." If the person you are talking to can answer "no, I'm not (a thoughtful person), your feedback needs to be more non-attributive.