

SPECIAL FOCUS ON "LEADERSHIP"



"Leaders inspire and lift others up to their highest potential by looking at them as an individual and the gifts they have."

Inspirational Leadership

By Kerry Elam

There are numerous schools of thought regarding whether you can groom a leader or if certain people have the predisposition to be better leaders than others. The same question arises regarding our personalities. Wikipedia states, "The study of personality has a broad and varied history in psychology with an abundance of theoretical traditions. The major theories include dispositional (trait) perspective, psychodynamic, humanistic, biological, behaviorist, evolutionary and social learning perspective. However, many researchers and psychologists do not explicitly identify themselves with a certain perspective and instead take an eclectic approach."

Personal experience leads to a similar conclusion that we are both born with innate ways of being and our environment also plays a part in how we see the world, treat others and our leadership styles. Being able to lead effectively takes awareness, commitment to the growth of people and wisdom.

Daniel Goleman, author of *Focus and Emotional Intelligence* said, "One aspect of wisdom is having a very wide horizon which doesn't center on ourselves," or even on our group or organization. He said generativity is a true sign of wisdom. Generativity means giving back without needing anything in return, Dr. Goleman said. The form of giving back could be creative, social, personal or financial, and "The wisest people do that in a way that doesn't see their lifetime as limiting when this might happen," he said.

Leaders inspire and lift others up to their highest potential by looking at them as an individual and the gifts they have. We all want to be successful, and sometimes just having someone believe in us and allow us to shine is all we need to excel. In this article, we will explore some fresh perspectives on inspirational leadership.

Lead by example

As a leader, it is critical to lead by example. For instance, if you expect overtime for important deadlines, your team is much more inclined to do their best if you stay and also work the overtime to ensure a successful outcome. You will contribute to the success versus demotivating them and giving them reasons to blame you for their extra hours. And when your team pulls through, reward them as best you can either through recognition, time off or monetary compensation. A simple message to the entire firm regarding your appreciation can be a powerful tool that costs you nothing, yet makes your team feel amazing.

Another lead by example scenario is to not feed into office politics or gossip. Focus on the positive aspects of people and issues that arise. If you hear your team talking negatively about someone or something, bring up a point that is positive about that person or event. Each challenging person or situation allows us an opportunity to grow. Show your team that you can "rise above" and maintain both a level of professionalism and gratitude. Your positive mojo benefits everyone.

Goal-setting

Merriam-Webster defines a goal as "Something that you are trying to do or achieve." We all have our own stories about successes and failures with setting goals and the water cooler talk is how annoying Human Resources is about the process for goals and reviews. How many times have you felt as though your manager was just checking the box to talk to you regarding your goals and do your review? In many cases, this is a last minute dreaded task. This happens even when it is tied to raises and bonus funding.

A fresh way to view goals is in relation to leadership to cultivate inspiration. To inspire the best from your team, messages must come from the top down. Come up with a plan that will align firm and personal goals to ensure you are focusing on

your areas of expertise and interest. Thomas Jefferson's view stated, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

The idea is to actually spend time with your team on creating meaningful and achievable goals that are catered to the areas in which each person excels and is most interested. This is a simple approach, yet a reminder is important to bring us back to the present and take goal setting seriously and with a positive attitude. Three key words are the focus on a goal-setting strategy to create inspiration:

1. Accountability: The first step is to ensure we are taking accountability in our role at work. Blaming the politics, culture or boss is not productive. If you are unhappy, it is your responsibility to figure out why and to work with your manager to make the changes necessary. Be proactive, seek out mentoring, ask questions, and give meaningful feedback. Manage your work, meet deadlines and celebrate success. Strive to expand your role and add value by bringing new opportunities to the table and staying in touch with your network.

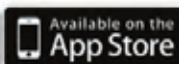
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2. Acumen: The second step is to determine what you want to focus on and learn more about in relation to your area of expertise. Make all efforts to become the expert to ensure you are adding value and being the go-to person in your specialty. Determine what you can do to become more known, such as conducting an internal training, mentoring others, writing articles, or speaking at conferences.

3. Aspire: Take time to have a heart to heart with yourself to determine what you want out of your career and personal life. Focus on the aspects that excite you professionally and personally and link your goals to areas you most enjoy. It is important to look at your personal life as

well to ensure you have an outlet for all the things you gain pleasure from

As Malcom Forbes said, "I think the foremost quality—there's no success without it—is really loving what you do. If you love it, you do it well, and there's no success if you don't do well what you're working at."

For example, maybe you love giving back to the community and your firm needs someone to lead the next community service event. Sign up for it to help to balance your work and personal interests.

So, how do you get started with the creative process of setting inspirational goals? Ask yourself the questions below to get started in creating a fresh, new goal plan.

- What inspires you?
- Who inspires you professionally?
- What is your favorite thing about work?
- What excites you personally at work?
- In what ways could the passions you pursue on a personal level benefit your firm?
- What do you want to be doing in five years?
- What skills do you want to improve upon?
- What type of project do you want to be on next?
- What would you like to help on internally?
- What would you like to learn more about internally?
- What would you like to help your firm accomplish next year?
- What is your favorite thing about working at your firm?
- What do you do to ensure balance

in your life?

- Do you give yourself time to do the things you love most?

Successful leadership stems from empowering your team to be the best they can be, leading by example and creating a safe environment for flourishing careers. When you and your team have a good day, everyone is happier, more productive and inspired. Everyone benefits in the end.

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