

A lot of us has had bosses who were bad leaders at a point in our lives. The bad leader we have had in our lives could be a tennis coach that shouted at you for losing a match or a boss who failed to acknowledge your good work and sees it as his own.

Why were these people referred to as terrible leaders? Was it because of the character they possessed? The answer is no, they probably were bad leaders because they failed to follow the essential rules of good leader characteristics.

This book *The Leadership Challenge* addresses the problem of a bad leader by asking questions like; What are the things necessary to do to be a good leader?. Essentially, having good leadership skill helps improve one's team performance. Also, good leadership gives one team members a positive behavior. When it comes to leaders, we tend to learn from looking at the people we love, therefore all leaders should be a good role model for their team.

Leaders should be careful about how their behavior influences other people because everybody is watching them.

When you imagine about the most influential role models you have in your life, a lot of people might cross your mind such as your grandfather, a professor and so on. But when we talk about leadership, there are a lot of role models we think about.

Role models in leadership do not really mean businessmen in cooperate outfit. Basically, anybody can become a leadership role model.

It is very logical to presume celebrities or men involved in sports as leadership role models for teenagers, however, this is not true. As a matter of fact, people we have one on one contact with have a greater impact and influence on us than people we do not know. According to research, members of the family are known to be the most essential leadership role models. Also, teachers, coaches, and business leaders are also known to high rank in leadership role models of people.

Therefore, there is a high chance that we might be a leadership role model sooner or later for someone. It is important we start learning how to become a great leader.

What makes a good leader though? One does not inherit the character of a leader, however, it is something that is sharpened by how we behave. The authors of the book claimed that anybody can become a great leader that is if the person is determined to become a good leader and also, the person must possess a lot of patience.

It was revealed by the researchers from Florida State University that overall, the best performances from all field was not as a result of being brilliant or being talented. But, effort and steady practice led to great performance. This is also true in the case of leadership.

Avoid having second thoughts: leaders should be direct about both their own value and the team's shared values.

Have you ever been around people who always change their judgments about an issue depending on who is around them at that time? You probably don't feel secure trusting such people.

It is important to be direct about your opinions as a leader. By being clear about your opinions, you instill trust and boost work performance among your team members.

It is important for leaders to know their precise personal and professional values before identifying the team's values.

A leader values have an impact on everything the team does. For instance, if the value of a leader is to have an obedient staff than a staff who takes a decision on his own without asking for permission, it will affect the way in which the staff acts.

Various studies have shown that, when the personal values of a leader are defined, the leaders become more productive and motivated. Therefore, it is important for a leader to have defined

personal values. An example of how a leader can define his or her personal values is to check his/her past and question yourself on which values have had an influence on how you make decisions.

Leaders should be precise about what their values are as well as the team's shared values. Leaders should make it a priority to talk about everyone's values openly. By doing this, everybody in the team can reach an agreement on the values presented.

Research from General Electric (GE) employee has proven that if the team members' values match with the firm's values; this can help improve commitment to the firm.

One of the members of the international team at GE, Hilary Hall said she was asked by her manager to fill a form that had personal questions such as her hobbies and favorite food. After, they all discussed the answers they filled. Therefore, a level of trust was created because they had knowledge of each other. Also, they were able to connect with each other values because they know certain things about one another.

This helped them to start working toward shared goals and eventually resulted in higher team performance. Due to this, they were able to work toward achieving the same goals thereby increasing team performance.

Show rather than telling: commendable behavior is more effective leadership skill than just giving commands.

If your boss wants you to wear a suit to work but your boss himself wears shorts and a T-shirt to work, you might be unwilling to follow his orders. On the other hand, you might feel wrong for wearing a T-shirt and shorts if your boss wears suits to the office just to make the clients have a better impression of him.

If you're gonna talk the talk, you gotta walk the walk. This simply means that a leader must lead by example by making sure they act in accordance with the team's values.

A good example would be that of Steve Skarke. When Skarke became the plant manager of a polymer company at Kaneka Texas, he came to the realization that the company's goal of becoming a "world class plant" was not represented in the aspect of housekeeping as there were garbage laying everywhere.

What Skarke did was that he bought a garbage pail and he started taking garbage in the plant every day without saying anything to anyone. He saw that the garbage was not filling the pail again after a few weeks. What changed? The employees learned from his behavior by realizing that in order for their plant company to become a world-class, it had to be clean and they started cleaning up.

A single person can not always do everything, the best a leader can do is to encourage other team members to act in accordance with the team values. Everyone should be responsible for teaching others how to live the shared values.

One of the most effective ways to do this is by storytelling, this is because people are more likely to relate to stories, hence they spread the stories. The president of Wingfoot Commercial Tire Systems, Phillip Kane, sends a letter to his 25,000 employees regularly. This letter contained stories of the most essential lessons learned in the company for that particular week. By telling stories and repeating stories to others, the staffs of Kane were indirectly educating others.

Imaginations should be used: it is important for leaders to picture possibilities in order to establish incredible outcomes.

If a clear picture of a goal is given, it is very easy to work towards achieving a future goal. Therefore, if you want to be a successful leader, you should be able to imagine future possibilities.

Having a vivid imagination is more important than being intelligent, this was said by Albert Einstein.

Evidence from various research shows that 75% of people believe that leaders should be forward thinkers while 30% of people say that their colleagues should be fast thinkers. As a matter of fact, the ability to predict and picture what the future might bring is what differentiates leaders from every other person.

In comparison to the world of chess, leaders have to think like a grandmaster.

A grandmaster does not only think about his next moves, but he thinks of likely moves of his opponent, he must picture where his opponent might play next.

This is different from Bobby Fischer, a leader must also consider and think about his team members. It is essential that the goal of the team is a shared goal and not just the leader's goal.

It was revealed in a study conducted by Professor Henry Mintzberg of McGill University that it is important for people to feel like they belong to a particular thing, either a job or personal thing. When people have a sense of belonging to a particular goal, they become committed to it.

Good leaders can create a sense of belonging in the team by giving feedbacks and listening to the team's ideas and engaging everyone in creating goals. This is very important especially during tough times, even when people feel like giving up, they can get motivated due to a personal cause.

This is like driving a car if the visibility is poor, it makes one drive slowly because you cannot really see what is ahead of you. However, if the goal of a certain thing is clear and important to us, it keeps us going even when there is an obstacle.

Get everyone on board: enroll others to participate in your collective vision.

It is important for leaders to motivate and inspire their team members with common ideas that every member of the team will support. For instance common ideas such as the pursuit of happiness, freedom, peace of the world, confidence, and self-respect.

Some specific ideas give us the sense that we are doing something that has meaning. When we notice that the action we take counts, this makes us become proud of our work. Good leaders should inspire pride among their team members.

It was shown by Nancy Sullivan the vice president of disability benefits at the Trustmark Companies that it is effective when one communicates with team members at your own conviction. When Sullivan team were struggling with reaching their goals, she wrote a four-page letter justifying why their work mattered and the importance of reaching their goals. This letter was hung in the office kitchen so everyone can read from it.

By doing this, Sullivan renewed the sense of purpose among the team members. Once the team was reminded about the reason they were working for, they ended up fulfilling and achieving beyond the business goals.

One important factor is enthusiasm. There are various techniques for establishing emotional connections among team members and the collective vision. One of such techniques is using symbols as well as figures of speech.

After Janet MacIntyre started her job as the unit leader of a Canadian hospital at the intensive care and cardiac unit where new types of equipment had just been provided, she realized that most of the staffs did not know how to operate the machines and they would need to learn how to use them.

Therefore, Janet used symbols just to bring her staffs together. She used a logo, a slogan and a mascot that is connected to the culture of the Canadians. This logo, slogan, and mascot also indicated how the team members had embarked on their journey. Also, a “passport” was introduced by Janet which consisted of a map where all the information regarding the new unit can be found as well as a checklist where everyone can track what they have learned so far.

By doing this, the team members can really experience the meaning of the journey and it helped them become familiar with the new machines.

Now that we know the steps a leader has to take to make sure his team follows them. However, following a leader without a specific motive does not create remarkable outcomes.

Leaders need to inspire their team members to follow a common motive, the following chapters of this book will show you how.

Make your own way: A good leader should actively search for challenges and opportunities.

It is normal for a person to stay within his or her comfort zone. If we want to become a successful leader, it is important to embark into things that are unknown to us a few time. All the best leaders that are known grasp new opportunities as well as new challenges.

Most times, things get delayed if no one takes responsibility for change. Someone needs to take the lead in achieving and bringing positive changes.

It is shown by research that individuals who exhibit proactive behavior are more effective leaders

For instance, when Starbucks refused to put his finance into blenders, one of the store managers took it upon herself to buy the blender in order to sell her own drink. Afterward, this drink became very famous and most of us might have tried one of the drink: the Frappuccino.

After Starbucks realized how successful the blenders were, Starbucks decided to finance it and it has profited a lot from selling Frappuccinos.

One can get ideas from anywhere and Frappuccino is an example of that. Nobody wants to be caught with unexpected developments or changes in the market structure. Therefore, leaders should be aware of what is happening in their surroundings.

There are so many things a leader can do in order to gather opinions and ideas about what is going on in their surrounding. For instance, if you work in a company that gives professional

services, you could visit a similar company that offers the same service as yours just to get a new dimension of things.

Also, you can call someone that has used your company's service once and ask the person why they did not come back to your company. Also, you could make an unknown call to your company, that is, you act like you are a customer and see how the employees in your company answer the phone.

Emphasis should be made on small wins even though you risk a big failure.

One of the characteristics of a good leader is the ability to take a risk and having your team members at your back when you take such risks.

One can spend a long time in taking big risks before you can achieve a great result. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to emphasize small wins. When a person feels that a task is achievable, they become more certain and more motivated while trying to complete it.

It was revealed by the researchers from Harvard Business School that small wins can motivate people to do more. Take for instance the case of Don Bennett, he was the first single-leg amputee to climb Mount Rainier which is over 14,000 feet about sea level. Although he did not achieve these remarkable feet by constantly imagining himself at completing his goal. He did this by focusing on each leap.

Leaders need to maintain this type of thought: concentrating on moving from a small win to another small win and not just big win or goals that are unattainable.

Additionally, good leaders should learn that mistakes are normal and ensure that their team members learn from their mistakes. The Innovation process researchers say that success generally isn't born of success but of failure and success mostly inspires failure,

This was also what Kelli Garvanian a solution consultant at Emdeon found out when her team members business outcome failed. At first, she was always nagging her team members, but she asked for feedback later and realized that something had changed.

Afterward, it became a top concern for Garvanian to change her behavior and become more open to her team members. She had her team members feedback on her desk so it can serve as a constant reminder for her to read it. After every meeting, she would ask her team members what they gained from the discussion.

Eventually, she was able to create a good atmosphere for learning. People were not afraid of failing anymore which led to great team performance.

Any leader's agenda should have good teamwork and a supportive team atmosphere

As it is well known that Rome was not built in a day. Also, it was not built by a single person. Therefore, both team members and leaders need to work hand in hand so as to achieve great outcomes. One of the important features of good teamwork is trust among leaders and his team members.

Research that was done on trust and organizational performance acknowledged that organizations where the employees have trust in their leaders as well as the organizations; people in that organization become more innovative, profitable and perform well.

One way to enable trust is to show your team members that you also trust them

When a program manager at KLA-Tencor, Masood Fakharzadeh was told to direct a product development team that was offshore for the first time, he informed the team that he would like to hear their advise and feedback openly. By doing this, he showed the team members that he trusted in their skills. Due to this, the team member had trust in him and began to share ideas with him which led to the success of the project.

A leader should not only be trusted by his team member, but the leader also needs to encourage trust between his team members. That is when the team members will feel like they are on the same page of trying to achieve the same goal.

One of the methods to strengthen trust among team members is to create more face-to-face contact. In the westernized world that we are now, face to face contact is necessary in cases where team members are not working in the same office.

It was proven by Wilson Chu, a program manager at RingCentral when he asked his team members offshore to use a webcam to communicate with one another during meetings online. People communicated better and the conversation became personal because they felt they have known each other well. Also, this fostered trust among them and they were willing to share their ideas easily.

When a leader empowers his team members, the outcome is an exceptional achievement.

Picture a scenario where you have workmate or boss who does not acknowledge your good work. This will definitely make you feel less motivated and you might not want to continue with the good work because you feel low and unrecognized.

A leader must make his team have a sense of ownership when it comes to their own work. It was shown by research that when a person is exposed to an uncontrollable situation or the person feels vulnerable, such person performs poorly in work than those that are not exposed to such situations. Therefore, by leaders empowering their staffs, this can lead to more effective performance.

For example, the management of Aruba Networks had great trust in his workers any time it comes to vacation policy. When the manager noticed that the vacation of the employees was clashing with work, he let the employees choose the time they wish to go on vacation so as not to clash with the work at hand.

By empowering his employees with autonomy and having faith in them to make the right decisions, the employees' performance increased effectively.

Leaders also need to enhance their team members confidence and ability aside from giving them freedom of choice and power.

It was revealed by Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of Claremont Graduate University that performance is well achieved when we are faced with challenges which depend on if we have the right skills. If we challenge ourselves in the right proportion we become aware of what is happening and we feel in line.

On the other hand, when we do not have certain abilities to finish a task, we become scared which hinders us from doing well. In order for a leader to see the team's great performance, a leader needs to consider the settings in which everyone works better.

An example would be that of consultant Abhijit Chitnis's which his boss enhanced his confidence by teaching him before he met his first client proposal presentation and by giving him good feedback when they were on break. Even though he made a little mistake no one noticed it because his presentation was great and successful.

Some of the most important ways to motivate team members are giving feedback and acknowledgment for great work.

As we have seen in this book that it is important to give employees freedom of choice. It is a leaders job to acknowledge his team members when they have done a great work.

When a leader motivates and communicates with his team members, they perform their task well. Team members need to know what they need to do to achieve a good result. Praising the team for a job well done openly is good as well as being positive and telling the staffs what they need to do to complete a task is also helpful.

Also, giving feedbacks regularly is important as it shows the members of the team that they are doing the right thing.

When the manager of HVAC Manufacturing group, Mr. Harun Özkara realized that there was a high turnover rate among his employees which was affecting his research and development (R&D) department, he implemented meetings every Friday just so he can update his team members on what can be improved in R&D.

With these meetings, he was able to discuss what he expected from the team in order to improve their performance and feedback was given by him to his members. Eventually, Harun was able to reduce the high turnover rate from his employees and better work performance was achieved. Therefore, it is very essential for a leader to acknowledge his team members for doing great work.

Giving basic personal appreciation like telling a person you did a job well has been shown to have a higher effect than giving impersonal appreciations such as giving an end of the year bonus.

When recognition is unforeseen and well deserved, it is more effective. During an interview with the authors of this book, a woman said she was delighted when her CEO came all the way from Singapore to Hong Kong just to appreciate her for doing a job well done. She said such an act of acknowledgment motivated her to do more than any other monetary compensation.

A leader should motivate his team members to celebrate their own values and successes.

Since people love to celebrate, leaders should make use of these opportunities in the workplace. Celebrations in company bring people together around goals and values. It also establishes a sense of community which leaders can enhance.

Belonging in a community is important in the lives of humans. Vigorous research has shown that people are happier, wealthier, become more trusting and share more ideas when they belong to various social connections.

Also, studies have revealed that celebrations in the corporate world unite staff together and helps them in socializing which can enhance the corporate community.

The celebration does not have to be big. This was demonstrated by Kurt Richarz, the executive vice president of sales at Seagate Technology. Every month he asked all his staff to choose one member that has contributed to the company throughout that month via peer review. During the conference call held every month with the whole team, he then shows the photo of the person that was nominated mostly from the peer review for recognition and acknowledgment. This zeal everyone shows in this monthly celebration has led to an increase in the community spirit.

Leaders should partake in any organizations celebrations for credibility. As it is well known that for a team to be successful, trust and credibility are important. Celebrating the organization wins and shared values is not enough, leaders need to be partaker of such celebrations.

Leaders can be partaker of numerous activities. They can prove to their team members that they care about them by attending meetings, or organizational gathering. Even small gestures such as saying hello when you meet your staff members in the hallway matters.

Even though all that is said about being a good leader is a lot to take in. if a leader follows the tips given in this book step by step, you and your team will achieve excellent results.

The Leadership Challenge by James M. Kouzes, Barry Z.

Posner Book Review

All the great leaders know that they need to establish a mutual relationship and trust with their team- not by being an authoritarian leader. Good leaders are not scared of trying something

new if the decision is good for both the team and team success. Also, good leaders are always opened to learn something new either by getting feedback from their team members just to improve themselves.

Attend your own party.

Take note of essential occasions in your organizations and mark them as you would do for birthdays and important event in your personal life. If you are celebrating an event, carry everyone in your team along by making it known to them in advance. It is essential for leaders to take part in an organization's celebration. That is the best way to show credibility and that you really care.

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