

10 Ways My Leadership Has Changed in 10 Years

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Lemonlight recently hit its 10-year anniversary, and in honor of the milestone, I've been looking back at how much has changed for both the company and my role as a leader.

I started by figuring things out as I went along, but my approach to leadership has evolved in some pretty big ways over the years. Here's a look at the top ten ways my leadership has changed since we started this journey.

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1. I'm more proactive vs. reactive

In the beginning, I'd often react to things as they happened – fires popped up, and I'd rush to put them out. Now, I work to anticipate issues before they become problems. Being proactive has saved time, stress and energy, and it allows us to keep our focus on moving forward rather than always playing catch-up.

2. I ask more questions

When I first started, I'd sometimes skip asking questions, thinking I already knew the answers or could just figure it out on my own. But over the years, I've learned that asking questions up-front saves so much time and energy. I ask everyone questions now – team members, clients and partners –

because understanding their perspectives and getting the context I need helps me make smarter decisions.

3. I'm more tuned into the market

I didn't have a background in production before I started Lemonlight, so I had to learn a lot about the industry and market from trial and error. Now, I keep a close eye on what's happening in the space so we can stay a step ahead. Being more aware of market shifts has helped with day-to-day decisions and long-term planning.

4. I've built confidence over time

In the early days, I faced a lot of self-doubt. I'd already had one business fail, so I often questioned my decisions and wondered if I was really cut out for this. Over the years, I've gained confidence by navigating the ups and downs. I know what I'm capable of now, which makes me a stronger leader for my team.

5. I listen to my instincts

Truthfully, trusting my instincts didn't come naturally at first. I used to question them and end up in situations I probably could have avoided. These days, I lean into those feelings – I've learned my instincts are often right, and trusting them has become a huge asset.

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6. I've learned to balance data

with human insight

Data is important, no question. But over the years, I've come to realize that the people and stories behind the numbers are just as essential. Balancing data with the human side of things gives a more complete view and helps us make decisions that are both smart and people-centered.

7. I've let go of control and embrace delegation

When you start a company, it's tempting to try to do it all. But letting go and trusting others has been a game-changer over the last decade. Delegating has freed me up to focus on the bigger picture, and it's helped build trust and domain expertise across the team.

8. I'm more focused on growth

Early on, I was laser-focused on meeting immediate goals. My work days were spent doing the work to fix and manage the business. Now, I'm all about growth and scaling – both for the company and for the people who work here. Rather than putting out fires, I spend more of my time helping chart paths forward for our company and our team.

9. I've become a mentor for other entrepreneurs

Over the years, I've learned so much from connecting with other entrepreneurs in the trenches with me. Now that I've internalized some of that wisdom, sharing my own lessons with others has been incredibly rewarding. I love being able to support new entrepreneurs, helping them navigate challenges and avoid some of the mistakes I made.

10. I've learned to manage my emotions

Leadership comes with its share of stress, and managing my emotions has been key. In the beginning, I'd get swept up in the highs and lows, but now I have tools to keep things level and recover from the bad days. It's been essential for my own well-being and creating a positive work environment.

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On the day we started Lemonlight, I never imagined the business would end up where it is. These ten lessons were all transformative in their own way, helping us take small steps forward that add up over the years. If you're on your own leadership journey, I hope these takeaways help you move forward, too!

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