5 Ways to Be The Leader Your Team So Desperately Needs

It’s no coincidence that the top ten grossing films year over year lately are dominated by the action/adventure genre. In fact, it’s a cultural statement. We need heroes in our lives, and we look to them for inspiration.

But, these films are fantasy, and the problem is that we live in a time when the real people we once looked up to are continually letting us down. I’ll leave off the lengthy list of names, but the truth is that no matter our perspective we don’t have the mentors and idols we once had.

It’s in the news every day. We’re let down every day. And every day, we search for heroes to no avail.

So we turn to fantasy to find our heroes. These films fulfill our desire to find the good in our leaders, to feel motivated by their purpose and to revel in their success. When it comes to our heroes, fantasy has replaced reality.

And yes, fantasy might work in some cases, but it doesn’t go far at the workplace . . . that’s where reality sets in as we go about our daily tasks. To accomplish our goals, we need to find the good in what we are doing, we need to feel motivated by a purpose and we need to feel successful in real time, not in a time machine.

That inspiration and motivation can come from within but there’s also one other really important place…a leader. And that leader should be you. You can be the hero that your team so desperately needs at work, steering them toward success. At work, everyone needs someone to look up to, someone to guide them, and someone to reinforce the good that they are doing. That someone needs to be you.

Here’s how you can be the hero your team so desperately needs.

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1. Provide a vision.

No matter your role and no matter your level, you should provide vision to your team. I run a global marketing agency and my team relies on me to set the vision for how we are going to move forward. As a team leader, you too can provide the vision for what your team needs to accomplish. Set a guidepost for what the team should strive for, and they will follow your leadership. By setting the stage, you will be cementing your role as the hero that your the team needs.

2. Engage the team.

Once you set your vision, make sure you engage your team in how they will contribute to the vision you’ve set. Make sure they understand their own role in attaining those goals you’ve set, and make sure they understand what they need to uniquely do to help the team to succeed. By engaging them right at the beginning, they will immediately see you as the hero for the team.

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3. Dig in.

Continually show the team what you are doing to contribute as well. You can’t just set a vision, engage the team and then walk away. Your role should purposefully demonstrate that everyone should be in it to win it. Inspiration comes in the form of daily perspiration as the team will look to you to not only set the vision but also be a role model on how the work gets done. Sit with the team, not above them, in hitting the milestones that will accomplish your mission. That’s how you

act like a hero on a continual basis.

4. Celebrate the milestones.

As you dig in with the team, make sure you celebrate every success along the way so everyone can see the progress that you are making. Toast to the team at every corner, and they will feel motivated by your leadership and literally feel what success is going to look like when you reach your goals. Heroes make people feel good about the good they are doing.

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5. Fail forward.

The team is going to make mistakes, both individually and collectively. Create an environment that encourages risk taking and facilitates learning. That's what a hero would do! Rather than making an example of a failure, make it an opportunity for the team to learn. Move forward from your mistakes, and take them on as a team. Chances are those mistakes won't repeat themselves as a result.

Think of yourself as the hero that your team needs, and act like the hero that your team needs. But, at the same time, make them the heroes in your success as a team, because at the end of the day, they truly are the heroes . . . you've just inspired and motivated them to be up for the task!

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