Why Self-Leadership is Essential to Your Success

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It’s too bad that we don’t come with an operator’s manual when we are born. If we did, it would be a lot easier to make better decisions, own our mistakes, be candid with ourselves and others, and show up as optimal versions of ourselves—essentially, to lead ourselves to success in our relationships and careers. The irony is, we struggle to be our best while simultaneously hoping to lead others to become theirs. But our businesses and our personal lives depend on us being qualified self-leaders before anything else.

What is a self-leader?

Being a self-leader implies owning and dissecting the stories you tell yourself. In today’s hyper-social world, it can be very easy to craft a version of ourselves that isn’t true. We can do this to promote positivity, but if we are not truly positive people, acting on our positive belief systems, this conflict will eat away at us, and our businesses and relationships will suffer. The fix for this is self-awareness, which is essentially self-management. How we consciously choose to be heard or to give and receive feedback, is the first step toward excelling at self-leadership.

Why self-leadership is important

When we are proactive and thoughtful, the toxicity that can erode relationships, undermine teamwork, and damage company culture is eradicated. The modeling of effective

communication, which begins with our personal reflection on our business goals, interpersonal desires, and past and ongoing failures and successes, leads to a culture of that same communication and the fostering of successful problem-solving initiatives that are integral to growth.

Just as it's impossible to lead others successfully if you aren't leading yourself in that direction first, your executives must be equally strong self-leaders if they wish to lead their teams to similar successes. It is easy to see how self-leadership through the chain of command becomes integral to an organization's success. When self-leadership spreads to entry-level positions, whether in your business or simply in the case of your five-year-old picking up those same habits at home, everyone involved reaches their potential at a greater pace, and the organization, whether in business or family, inevitably thrives.

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Ways to cultivate self-leadership

Be self-aware, humble, and engaged. Practice self-reflection to assess how you contributed to a situation, and commit to responding with your best self. Understand how you affect your peers and the teams' shared outcomes. Your attitude and effort matter.

Be responsible for cultural understanding. Every team member should know how they support the company's mission, so take responsibility for how you contribute to that. Be curious and ask questions, as this fuels inclusivity, proactivity, and creativity.

Take initiative. Don't wait to be told what to do or expect other people to solve problems for you. Raise your hand and volunteer. Make suggestions for improvement. Never settle for

mediocrity.

Be accountable. Own your attitude, effort, and mistakes. Avoid complaining and blaming; instead, ask yourself what you can do to make things better.

Keep it real. Provide direct, timely, and caring feedback in order to help others be their best. Ask others to return the favor.

Be brave. Share your ideas, support each other, and ask for help when you need it. Be okay with failing, recognizing that we are all learning more about how to succeed every day.

Take care of yourself. Nobody knows you better than you. Take responsibility for your health, happiness, and attitude. Have honest conversations with your manager about your overall well-being. Remember that self-care is a discipline, not a luxury.

The very best leaders lead by example. They know that self-leadership is essential to success. When you understand who you are and take responsibility for how you show up, you'll make better decisions and build stronger relationships. People are more likely to respect and trust you and will be inspired to follow your lead.

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