

Great Leadership is about Influence not Authority

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A naive leader might think that they know best. They might think that they have all the right answers, and that everyone should just follow what they say.

I know, because when I first was in a leadership position that's how I thought.

But that is so wrong. And it's wrong for one simple reason that I can illustrate in a game.

The Game

Imagine your favorite sports game. Maybe that's football, basketball, tennis, or something else. Now think of the very best player of that sport you know. That person may be the best player in the entire world. They may be absolutely fantastic with millions of fans. But how well would they do on their own without the team?

The reality is that they would lose every single game as a lone player. They may be the best, but a team of average players is always going to beat the best player if he or she is alone. Why do we think it's any different for business?

It isn't.

The Team

A well-functioning team is always going to do better than a lone genius dictating orders. It's important for leaders to recognize this. Some leaders think too highly of themselves. They may be a genius. But it takes so much more than a genius to build an incredible company. As a leader, it's important to be humble and learn from your employees. Listen to them. Listen so well that you are molded by them. When you are wrong, admit it! Be open. Leaders often say that it's lonely at the top. But it really isn't if you are doing it right.

Being a great leader is about building mutual respect with your team. It's never about barking orders out of a position of authority. If you can build that mutual respect, then you can lead from a place of influence. Below are three ways to help build the trust and respect with your team.

Listen to your Employees

Every leader will likely say that they listen to their employees. But are they really? When I say listen I mean something deeper than simply hearing others. **Leaders should listen to truly understand their employees.** Then they should be willing to be molded by what those employees tell them.

As humans we can only directly see about 70% of our body. If we have something embarrassing in our teeth we either need a mirror or other people to tell us about it. The same goes for our personality. **There are flaws in our personality that we can't see.** We need other people to share it with us. It isn't easy to truly listen to people when they are sharing our flaws. But that's when we need to listen more than ever because that is the first step to improving the problems.

Find Great Mentors

To be a great leader, you need great mentors. You need wise people who have already gone down this journey in life. And the more wise mentors you have the better leader you can become. **The reason is because humans have a wonderful ability to learn lessons from each other.** We don't need to make all the same mistakes that others have before us. Instead let them share with you what those mistakes were and learn how to avoid them. Great leaders stand on the shoulders of the giants who came before them.

Be Humble

There is something about the role of a leader that sometimes makes the leader think they are better than everyone else. First off, that is not true at all. But secondly, it's a recipe for failure. **Pride comes before the fall.** It takes a great team to succeed at business. Great employees don't want to work for a prideful boss. So eventually that boss will lose their good team and their company will fall into chaos. Great leaders avoid this by being humble. They take the blame for failure and give away the credit for success.

Lead with Influence not Authority

Great leaders recognize that it takes a great team to be successful. So, they lead from a place of influence instead of authority. And by doing that they can start to make a positive impact in their company and the world.