

Leadership

Here are some tools and principles that will help you grow as a leader.



Six Practical Leadership Principles



A lot has been written about leadership, I've read books, articles and listened to speakers. There is not one thing that makes a great leader, each person is a bit different in personality, style, gifting and drive. Some leaders are bold and charismatic while others are quiet and reserved. I've seen great leaders with each of those traits. So what's important to know in leadership? As a young person what can be done to grow as a leader?

Here are some things I've learned over the years in my experience leading in the banking/accounting world and also in full time ministry:

- 1. Be the best version of you** - Don't try to copy another leader's style or personality. Work at knowing yourself and what your strengths and weaknesses are. Learn from other leaders but be who you are and keep improving who you are. Personal growth should be a high priority if you want to be a great leader. Early in my leadership I would often try to imitate leaders that I admired and would wish I had gifts I did not have. That led to frustration and disappointment. As I got comfortable with who I was, I got better as a leader.

- 1. Ask for criticism and feedback** - Give the people around you permission to criticize you and give honest feedback about your leadership and the systems, procedures and policies that are in place. Create safe ways for that to happen. Doing that allows people to be open and honest and helps to keep you humble. When I get critical feedback it always motivates me to get better, focus more and make adjustments and ask questions.
- 2. Take the time to plan** - Most people do not take time to write down their plans and think about how to get there. Developing a life plan that involves personal and business is critical for high level leaders. This means setting aside time to think, study, analyze and dream. It means writing down your plans or your vision for the future and then developing goals on how to get there. It also means putting those goals on your calendar, updating your progress as you go and staying focused. When you spend time planning it's easier to say no to good things so that you can say yes to the best things. Planning well keeps you focused on the right things, not the urgent things.
- 3. Learn to relax** - Most leaders have a high drive and love to get things done. However, if you run at full speed too long you can blow a gasket or your whole motor. High level leaders know how to stop, relax and recharge. They understand when they need to take a break, get away and spend time doing something they love doing or simply spending time with family and friends. Taking a sabbath day each week is a great place to start. Don't wait until you are burned out to relax and recharge, build it into your daily, weekly, monthly and yearly planning. If you don't deal with stress, the stress will deal with you.
- 4. Build healthy relationships** - Leadership is all about relationships. To build healthy relationship you have to be healthy yourself. So deal with your junk, go see a counselor or a coach and work on your issues. Then work at deepening the relationships in your life at home and work. When the people around you trust you, know you and understand you, the team will be much more productive. This takes time, patience and lots of hard, honest conversations. Speaking the truth with love leads to healthier relationships. Caring about the people you lead is vital in leadership. If people know that you actually care about them as a person they will follow you wherever you go.
- 5. Take Personal Responsibility** - This one is huge. Instead of complaining about what is happening ask yourself how you can lead better, what can you

1. contribute to make things better? What part do you need to own? What is under your control? Doing this helps to keep you humble and focused on yourself and not the other person. Coming up with solutions to problems instead of complaining about the problems is what high level leaders do. They own their mistakes, admit when they failed and ask for forgiveness. They don't make a bunch of excuses or shift the blame. This is a mark of maturity and builds incredible trust and respect.

Learning to lead is really learning about yourself, knowing your blind spots and barriers. Knowing your core fears, weaknesses and scars. When you raise your level of self-awareness you raise your level of leadership. Then if you can surround yourself with people that will be honest with you and are gifted in areas you are not, incredible synergy can start to happen.

Seven Servant Leadership Principles



The greatest leaders in history are the ones that had a mindset to serve others. There has been a lot written about servant leadership and many today try to practice being a servant leader. But just how practical is that in the real world. When you have to get things done, ship your product or close the sale, how can you serve?

It can be hard when the heat is on to be thinking about serving others. Yet if you want to be great you must learn the fine art of serving others as a leader. Here are just a few things I believe are important in having a servant leader mindset.

1. **Keep Growing** - If you want to serve the people you lead and the business or organization you work at, then grow. If you become a lid for the organization then you are not serving anyone well. To me this means that you are reading and studying your area of business. It means that you are talking to others that are doing it better than you and learning as much as possible about how to improve yourself as a leader and whatever product or service you offer. The bottom line is that servant leaders are constantly growing and

changing and improving. The more you grow the more you can pour into the people around you.

2. Have a Vision - You have to know where you are going and be able to articulate that to your team on a regular basis. A servant leader is constantly reminding everyone about why we are doing what we are doing. Where we are heading and what the win is every day. Casting vision is vital to being a servant leader.

3. Think Strategically - A servant leader must be thinking ahead and planning. One of the best ways you can serve people is by being well prepared and by thinking of things that could go wrong before they do. This involves analyzing what is working well, what is not working well, what is missing and what is confusing. Going through that process with your team will help bring clarity to the work being done.

4. Collaborate - Servant leaders realize they don't have all the answers, so they will involve the people around them in the decision making process. They will ask what other people think and be open to new ideas and suggestions. They allow other people that know more about the situation to make decisions and then back them up. Servant leaders are also very open about what is happening and what is coming, they don't keep secrets from their team.

5. Empower People - This is one of the most powerful principles of servant leadership. It's developing people and then allowing them to do their jobs. Servant leaders do not micro manage unless a person needs that extra attention. Empowering a person is trusting them to make decisions, without having to always check with you first. This can feel risky at times, but it builds your team and develops leaders. People learn from mistakes and it allows you to coach your team along the way.

6. Hold People Accountable - This is another important servant leadership principle. When you are leading someone it's important to be clear about what the expectations are and what results you want. It needs to be in writing and you need to talk about it on a regular basis. Setting goals and objectives with your team and then asking for regular updates on the progress is a great way to serve your people. When someone is not hitting the goals or meeting expectations you serve them by having honest conversations with them and telling them the

truth and coaching them on how to get back on track.

7. Care About Others - Finally the people you lead need to know that you actually care about them. That they are more than just an employee that is getting results. This means you have to get to know your team. Find out about their family and personal lives and ask them how they are doing. It means taking time to have conversations with them and carve out time to have fun together as a team. If your all business all the time you won't connect with your team and your not serving them well. When you take time for people especially when they are going through a crisis it's a game changer - People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Lead On

Take Your Next Step

For more information on how to
develop yourself and others as a
leader contact
chad@chadstutzman.com

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