

## **The Leader: Providing Mutual Support**

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There are some functions that we can do with our personal expertise, very professionally, without much effort. Then there are some activities that we get involved with that require a little help from others.

I'd like us to think about those times, for whatever reason, when we need special support from our associates, our friends, or our family. This type of support doesn't always move in one direction. Usually it requires a "mutual support" system. Hopefully, mutual support is a natural element in a family setting, but this kind of support also has tremendous implications in the business setting and beyond.

The idea of "mutual" implies there are advantages for all the parties concerned. It could be two people who worked together, a team working toward a common purpose, or even a total organization. Supportive people tend to come from many directions. The challenge for us is this: Do we see the need in our everyday life and work to help support others at their point of need? And, do we recognize the need for people to support us?

When we look up the word "mutual" in the dictionary, we find words or phrases including: reciprocal . . . an exchange. . . to share with others for the common interest. . . advantage to the parties involved. . . and something done or felt by two or more for or toward others.

We quickly can see that working for the "mutual" well-being of a group improves the relationships in the group, as well as the work performed by members of the group.

All of us enjoy seeing people who demonstrate personal excellence. This is true whether demonstrated by a great sports personality or a well-known leader. There's a difference in personal excellence and the idea of being a great contributor. Leaders who contribute to the well-being of others seem to have a "fire" within them that motivates others to achieve excellence.

To support others requires the will to positively affect others by making a personal contribution. It requires time and effort. Supporting others has a cost, but the results are worth the effort!

## ***Means To Provide Mutual Support***

### **1. Share The Weight**

There are times when all of us need help in staying strong and effective under the weight we have to carry. Having a "helping hand" in sharing those tough times helps us perform at a much higher level.

### **2. Lift The Spirit**

As members of a team, we need to regularly be sensitive to those who might need a little extra support. Such support pays fantastic dividends to both the individual involved and the team's total results.

### **3. Build Courage and Confidence**



When confidence is drained, when our courage is lagging, a magic occurs when we gain support from our associates. There are usually particular people we can positively affect. Recognize the potential we have to build up others.

#### 4. **Give Affirmation**

Affirmation of one's activities, their work effort, their personal contribution energizes a person to maximize their results. Meaningful affirmation, tends to offset the existence of any number of negative forces we might face.

#### 5. **Maintain Interpersonal Integrity**

When we are working with others, particularly when we're attempting to provide a support system, our effort needs to be perceived as real, as having integrity. Trying to "fake" support for others does more harm than doing nothing.

#### 6. **Be a Willing Listener**

Supporters need to be good listeners. We can't know where support needs to be given unless there's meaningful communication between the parties included. The key? Empathize! Listen with a will to help with the issue involved.

#### 7. **Help Maintain A Positive Direction**

It's fine to "cry together" at times, but such times should end with a desire to support a positive direction. Face personal issues with a secondary goal in mind that the underlying issues will be solved.

#### 8. **Commit To A Supporting Role**

Mutual support requires that we make a commitment. That commitment generates a higher confidence level and moves us toward personal growth. Making the commitment isn't enough; we must follow through and actually meet the commitment we made.

#### 9. **Freely Provide Sustenance**

When we are mutual supporters, we tend to provide the support needed. I do recognize that there are limits to our ability to provide the means of sustenance all our associates and team members need. But we can work to provide moral encouragement and other supportive initiatives.

#### 10. **Be A Back-Stop To Prevent Failure**

At times, real supporters have to step in and take more aggressive steps to prevent failure. This does not mean taking over another's responsibilities, or not allowing some failure, which is normal in life. It's just a matter of being ready, when appropriate, to "go the extra mile."