KEYS TO LEADERSHIP E150

We live in a world where hurry is encouraged, timelines must be met, and the busyness of life determines our overall success. It seems that the busier we are, the more successful we appear to be. I find this to be detrimental to strong, effective leadership. A hurried and busy leader creates more strain on an organization and on those they are leading. The busy and hurried leader runs the risks of missing important aspects of an organization and making critical mistakes that might potentially harm the organization, or, the most important piece of an organization, the individuals who make it up.

There are three keys, I believe, that lead to successful leadership.

* **The first key** to leadership success is to slow down. When we are caught up in the hassle and the bustle of work, timelines, and mandates, we miss out on what’s really important, building strong, positive relationships with those we lead. As Greg Mortenson wrote, “Slow down and make building relationships as important as building projects.” Relationship is everything when it comes to leadership. When we focus our attention on what really matters, productivity increases, morale goes up, and a positive culture is created. Slowing down means leaders are there to support, encourage, and serve those they lead. Leaders do not lead companies or organizations. Leaders lead people. If leaders are too busy to invest, support, and encourage those they lead, then they are not leaders. After all leadership is how we treat others.
* **The second key** to leadership success is to pay attention. Too often people in leadership get caught up in the money, bureaucracy, and the “title” and completely forget to pay attention to what is most important. When leadership stops paying attention to the hard-working individuals within their company or organization, employees become expendable. Paying attention to what employees are saying, wanting, needing, etc. is crucial to the growth and morale of any company and organization. To reference Colin Powell, “Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you stopped leading them.

They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.” Leadership must make a conscious effort to pay attention to those they lead. This means listening to, engaging with, and being in the trenches with those they lead.

* **The third key** to leadership success is to focus on detail. If you ask any Navy Seal, Special Forces, or high-ranking military officer, they will all tell you how vital the details are. Missing details means making grave mistakes; potentially jeopardizing the company or organization. Dan Crenshaw, in his book Fortitude, states, “Details matter. Ignoring them can be the difference between success and failure.” It is critical for leaders to focus on the details, not just in planning, but in listening and observing staff. Focusing on details means you are paying attention to what matters most. John Wooden once said, “It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.” It’s the hard-working individuals of the company that make big things happen. Focusing on detail is, in my opinion, the most critical keys to success in leadership.

**Summary:**

There are many more keys to successful leadership, but I believe starting with these three will begin to refocus the mindset of leaders.

Slow down, pay attention, and focus on detail.

Who we lead is much more important than what we lead?

Never forget, leadership is not a title or a position. Leadership is about how we treat those around us.

Invest in those you lead, and you will have a team and a family willing to work WITH you.

E150

Unleash the Leader Within

Work Sheet Questions…

1. If someone were to describe you, what one word would they use to describe you?
2. Can you identify a person who you regard as a strong leader and be willing to name him/her?
3. Write down four things that make this person a strong leader
4. Create a list of leadership traits
5. Are you able to say “No?”
6. Do you believe that Leadership is a gift given to a select few?
7. Describe the difference between a manager and a leader?
8. How would you rank the following in describing the Art of Leadership? Rank the following from 1 to 5 in leadership importance to you and why? Clarity, Courage, Decisiveness, Humility, Passion and Trust