



# TOP Tips to LIFT your Leadership

These insights into great leadership are simple but far too often overlooked.

*By Elizabeth McCormick*

**G**ood leaders are hard to find, and great leaders are even more elusive. Whether there's a team reporting to you or not, you have the ability to lift your level of respect with your peers while also improving your capacity for greater leadership opportunities.

To enhance your abilities as a leader, begin with an intentional mindset of being open to new ways of thinking and new ways of interacting with your peers, your team, and your organization as a whole. The following are the most important things you can do to move your leadership from good to great.

## Get to Know the People You Count on

It isn't necessary to know everything, but you do need to know the individual skillsets of members of your team. That way, you'll know who to approach to get the answers you need. When you learn about people on a personal level,

you'll know the best way to motivate each person, which will ratchet up productivity to amazing heights.

It's also important to ask your team for input, and listen to what they have to say. They'll appreciate being included in any decision made – especially if it affects their workload. When employees feel like a valued part of the process, it improves their personal connection and overall commitment to the desired results.

## Delegate to Team Members

Many leaders diminish their potential by hoarding tasks and duties. They usually do so for fear of what others will think if they “can't do it all.” This is a misconception that can lead to burnout. Even worse, it can cause people to lose their trust, respect, and loyalty to you as a leader.

Great leaders are also great delegators. If you're not sure what to delegate, follow this process:

**Make a list** of your specific tasks and duties.

**Put your name** next to the ones that you absolutely must do yourself. For example, signing checks, attending executive meetings, and obtaining certain high-level approvals aren't things you can delegate.

**For the tasks that are left, think** of people on your team and their skillsets. If they're capable of doing a task at least 80% as well as you, then delegate that task.

**Give people** autonomy to perform the delegated tasks (in other words, don't micro-manage them). Give them the authority to ask questions and get help if needed. People will surprise you with their skill when you trust them with new opportunities.

## Admit When You're Wrong

Everyone makes mistakes, and leaders are no different. When you make a mistake, be up front with your team. Your honesty and vulnerability will open a pathway to better trust and communication.

When you show your willingness to trust people with your mistakes, they in turn will feel more valued and will work with you to help correct errors. You'll ensure a lesson is learned for everyone involved.

## Show Appreciation

When your team members do good work, make sure you let them know you noticed. Write a hand-written thank-you note, give them a special gift card, and take time to recognize them publically. To make an even bigger impression, send hand-written notes to their spouses sharing how important they were to the team's success.

Appreciation goes a long way. As you incorporate a culture of gratitude, your staff will reciprocate that appreciation through loyalty and a job well done.

## Get Your Hands Dirty

The most successful leaders won't ever ask a team member to do something that they aren't willing to do themselves. People respect leaders who aren't afraid to jump in to accomplish any task needed. This doesn't mean you're doing the work for them, but at those critical moments when help is needed, your assistance could help motivate your team to reach – or even exceed – the goals set.

## Mentor Your Team Members

If you can help your members to become more successful, the whole team will benefit. The more you invest in your team members, the more they'll be willing to give in return.

“Many leaders diminish their potential by hoarding duties.”

“Let your team see you reading a book.”

As you lead by example in a mentorship role for those in your organization, others with similar skills and capabilities will follow your lead. This creates a culture where current and upcoming leaders develop a mindset of helping others succeed.

## Let Your Team See You Learn

Great leaders are learners. Let your team know you're reading a book or a trade publication, and encourage them to do the same. Start an optional book club focused on self-improvement and leadership. (You can meet virtually using Zoom or other video-based meeting solutions.) At the book club meetings, discuss how those books have made an impact on you and how they've helped change the way you lead.

## Keep Meetings as Short as Possible

Although necessary, meetings can be seen as disruptive and non-productive, especially if nothing is essentially accomplished. Be sure every meeting has a specific purpose and agenda that involves everyone in the room. The more you respect people's time, the more they'll respect you as a leader. Virtual meetings can be productive, too, if you use (and share with meeting participants) tips on remote gatherings from experts such as those at [letsgrowleaders.com](http://letsgrowleaders.com) and [trainyourboard.com](http://trainyourboard.com). 

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