

# Secrets to High-Impact Leadership

Use these leadership keys to turn problems into innovations.

By Brian Braudis

**A**n organization is only as strong as its leadership. You can increase your own impact – and that of upcoming leaders throughout your organization – by putting the following keys into action.

## Shift the Energy of Your Team

You can't remove negativity without replacing it with something. Use purpose to drive the conversation. Talk about your mission. Get your team excited about the future you envision. When your team has a growth mindset, it's only natural that your organization will grow.

There will always be uncertainty. But when you shift your team toward purpose and show your own commitment, anxiety drops, morale increases, and team members follow your lead.

## Cultivate Creativity

Open the floodgates of creativity by asking more questions. The days of a leader with all the answers are past.

Team members are intimately familiar with problems. They simply need you to provide them the space to contemplate how today's problems can become tomorrow's innovations.

Ask powerful questions, and be patient. Ideas will come pouring out in the discussions.

## Use Influence, Not Power

No one likes a pompous leader. Rather than relying on the power of position, reap the long-term benefits that come from building trust and influence.

When you rely on the power of your position, you not only expose weakness in yourself, you build weakness in others by forcing them to acquiesce. You stifle their growth and the potential for their unique contributions. Ultimately, the entire relationship is weakened. Defensiveness ensues, low trust

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follows, and potential for cooperation is lost – smothered by negative emotion.

Fight the impulse to command. Invest in the higher, more refined skills of finesse, influence, and persuasion – the building blocks of increased impact.

## Promote Daily Progress

Leaders are deemed successful only if they get results, and they get those results through working with people. On any given day, your team's efforts will be influenced by a mix of perceptions, emotions, and motivations that can either pull them to higher performance or drag them down.

As a leader, you have tremendous influence in promoting daily progress. You can do so by ensuring people have the environment they need to maintain momentum.

Avoid the toxicity of high pressure. Rather, set clear goals for meaningful work. Give people autonomy and ownership of the outcomes. Nourish your team's efforts by minimizing daily hassles, showing respect, and offering words of encouragement.

## Build a Body of Behavior

Be more of a model than a critic. Eschew these “killer Cs”:

criticizing	comparing
complaining	colluding
competing	contending.

Instead, talk about what went well. Add energy to the context. Show your team what's possible. When they know they can count on you for support and direction, momentum skyrockets.

## Focus on What Is Right, Not Who Is Right

Team members rely on leaders to create an environment that is impartial, where everyone has the same opportunities that are based on merit. Don't take sides. Use conflict to demonstrate your commitment to organizational success.

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Model a higher perspective that lifts others from their petty preoccupations and carries them above the fray. Be a stronghold trailblazer who guides the upward purpose of your team.

A leader's unique actions create ripples that spread, delivering ever-increasing impact that can be felt within and among teams. Set the behavioral norm by becoming known as the leader interested in organizational success over individual success. When you employ these secrets and increase your leadership impact, you set up your entire team for success.



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## The Path of a Leader

There are many shades and shadows on the leadership journey. For perspectives on some of these facets, make a note of these articles at [NonprofitWorld.org](http://NonprofitWorld.org):

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