



## 3 Keys for Bringing Out the Best in People



Bringing out the best in people is the essence of effective leadership. Although there are many important competencies required for effective leadership, there are three essential behaviors which play the greatest role in bringing out the best in people. These three keys are: **Treat People Like People, Treat Adults Like Adults, and Show Appreciation.** Let me explain why...

### **Treat People Like People**

The issue here is the importance of treating people like people rather than like "things". When a leader regards the members of their team as people, they acknowledge that everyone - regardless of position or tenure - has hopes and dreams, fears and stresses. They understand that people generally want to do a good job. And when results aren't what the leader expects, he or she addresses the issue as one person to another, rather than to dish out a "scolding" or respond in a manner which treats people simply as an "asset" or a "resource". In effect, good leaders treat people like they themselves want to be treated.

The adage, "Things get managed. People get led," is true. The statement is an acknowledgement that people have feelings and respond accordingly. A leader who treats people like "things" lacks empathy. The consequence of leaders treating people in an impersonal way is that they'll get a level of response from people, but not nearly the response and results they want.

***In order to bring out the best in people, treat people like people.***



## **Treat Adults Like Adults**

The issue here is the importance of treating adults like adults rather than like "children". A leader treats people like children when he or she insists that things be done their way. ("Do what I say, because I'm the parent, that's why...") A leader treats people like children when he or she micromanages. Micromanaging sends the message that a leader doesn't trust the quality of a person's work, their creativity, or their judgment. And when a leader lets people know they're not trusted, the team quickly learns not to trust their leader.

In contrast, leaders who treat adults like adults grant plenty of autonomy. They also get to hold people highly accountable. When a leader grants autonomy, he or she communicates that they trust people to be professional, hardworking, and responsible. It shows that they trust their judgment and that they trust the work will be done as promised.

***In order to bring out the best in people, treat adults like adults.***

## **Show Appreciation**

The issue here is the importance of appreciating the efforts people make rather than taking their efforts for granted or offering insincere recognition. The need for the esteem and respect of others is a key element of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

It's fairly self-evident that having one's effort taken for granted can be disheartening. If a leader wants people to do and be their best, it's important to demonstrate that he or she values them. That much is clear. But there is a difference between appreciation and recognition, and the distinctions are important to understand. Recognition is often provided under the guidelines of a recognition program which defines the parameters under which a person is entitled to some form of recognition.

On the surface, this seems like a reasonable approach which would encourage best effort. But there are two fundamental problems with recognition programs. The first problem is that a "structured" approach becomes impersonal and somewhat insincere. Recognition ends up bestowed upon someone because the program dictates that recognition be offered. The second problem is that recognition is offered to acknowledge a person's achievement rather than their effort.



**ELICITING EXCELLENCE**

*"Bringing Out the Best in People"™*

**Michael Beck International, Inc.  
Portland, OR USA**

Most people want to be appreciated for their efforts more so than for their accomplishments. Appreciation is generally personal and heartfelt, given from one person to another. And it's often spontaneously shown as a response to the effort someone put into completing a task. It is an expression of gratitude for someone's effort, and its impact is immediate and long-lasting.

Telling someone you appreciate their effort in completing a project over the weekend has a far greater impact than offering a token of recognition for the end result. Plus, the degree of appreciation expressed is generally in direct proportion to the effort and/or sacrifice made by the person.

***In order to bring out the best in people, show sincere appreciation for their efforts.***

Eliciting excellence is the essence of exceptional leadership.  
If you want exceptional results, treat people the way you'd like to be treated,  
grant plenty of autonomy, and show sincere appreciation.