



4 Easy ways to step up to Leadership

By Barbara Nixon

Tip #1 - Decide what kind Leader you want to be



Having a role where you lead other people can feel like a really daunting task. After all, you don't just have yourself to think about any more.

That's why it's really important to give some thought to what kind of leader you want to be, and how you're planning to do it, rather than jumping in feet first and figuring it out as you go.

Now, although there's really nothing wrong with this, it can often cause you to second guess yourself, and wonder whether you're doing it right at all.

So, here's a super quick exercise that will always get you back on track.

Step 1

Take some time out with a pen and a note pad.

At the top of your page write...

"what kind of Leader do I want to be?"

And then write down whatever comes into your head and keep going until you've exhausted everything.

Step 2

Now go through and write down how you're going to do this next to each one.

For example if you wrote down *'approachable'*, are you going to have regular 1-1's with people? Get the idea?

Step 3

Finally, make a plan of how you're going to weave these into your daily routine.

Tip #2 - Learn to listen



Listening is the number 1 skill of a leader. If you get good at this you'll really see the difference.

There are so many benefits as people feel: Motivated; Valued; Cared for; Special; Important...And it costs absolutely nothing. In fact, it's what everyone wants...to be heard.

The problem is that listening is a skill that takes practice and to be honest, most people are not great at it at all and only half listen.

But the thing is...it is a skill that you can improve...just by giving it some attention.

The secret to listening is to stop what you're doing and really focus on that other person and what they're saying to you, and not to worry about what you're going to say next.

Use eye contact, and your body language to show that you're listening as well. By this I mean, nodding, and making listening noises to encourage them to continue speaking and use their words when you reply so they know that you understand what they're saying.

A point to remember here is to not be afraid of silences. We're hard wired to fill in silences as quickly as possible, but instead just wait. The other person might continue to speak or you'll come up with the right question or reply that suits that moment...either way, silence is no bad thing!

Note: Practice Makes Perfect

Tip #3 - Make time for your team



Let's face it. You can't achieve anything without your team. You really need them. But you also need them to feel motivated; valued and empowered. When they're in that state there's nothing you can't achieve.

Now although there are a number of different things that your team will need from you (and you've probably highlighted them in the list you made in step 1) if all you did was make time for them, and listen, you'd actually be off to a fantastic start.

By making time for your team and doing so consistently, you are showing your team that you value them and that they matter. You'll also be able to support them, coach them and help them too - which in turn will give you a motivated, productive team.

ACTION

Book in a one to one meeting with each member of your team on a regular basis. How often you do this depends on your team and business, but aim for at least once a month.

Once you've booked this in, create a very loose agenda that you both stick to at every meeting...so that you cover all the points you need to.

Finally, try not to just focus on work or project updates. Spend some time chatting about how the person is feeling, or whether there's anything they want to discuss.

By doing this consistently, you'll find that the one to one's really benefit both of you, and will become a core part of your communication strategy.

Tip #4 - Book time out with yourself



Just because you're 'The Boss' doesn't mean that you have to put yourself at the bottom of your own pecking order.

Here's what I mean...do you put yourself last after: your family, your team, your business / department, and even your friends?

If the answer is yes...then this is your wake up call.

Always putting yourself last can lead to feeling: exhausted; drained; frustrated; stuck in a rut and in time resentful.

It's the airplane safety scenario...'put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others.'

You're really no good to anyone when you're feeling drained and shattered.

Step 1

Spend some time deciding what you really need to be able to be at your best every single day. Remember this doesn't have to be rocket science...the simplest things work wonders.

For example – a walk in the fresh air; time to read your book; your favourite coffee in the morning; time to wake up gradually...and add these as non-negotiables into your day.

Step 2

Book a re-curring meeting with yourself every single week. This doesn't have to be long – but it's your time to plan; be strategic; gather your thoughts and reflect on the previous week.

About Barbara



Barbara helps Business Owners, Directors and Managers get back in control of their day; work smarter and improve their confidence and mindset.

She does this through her online leadership development programme (The Boss Hat Programme) The Leadership Toolbox and one to one Executive Coaching.

She prides herself on teaching leaders at all levels the small tweaks they can make to reap MASSIVE results.

All designed to help them build a career and a life they love.

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