

## **Timeless Transformations**

### ***Nitty Gritty Leadership***

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You girls may remember while you were growing up that I used to spend a lot of time reading all kinds of leadership books. For about 20 years, I read every best seller that hit the shelves. I still do to some extent but I find myself writing more and reading less. I suppose once you get a certain age, you have a stronger desire to give (write) rather than receive (read). During all of those years that I was reading, I would always make notes electronically. I would keep the notes meticulously filed then go back to them whenever I had a need or interest. As the years have gone by, I've added my own perspectives about what I have found to be useful. These notes are important to me because they are a part of who I am and what I believe to be true. I thought I would share a few of my notes about leadership. Leadership is such a broad subject, I stripped away a lot of the fluff and just pulled out some of the nitty gritty. I see all three of you as strong leaders. As you advance in your career, you might find some of this information helpful. My intention is always to transfer my knowledge so you can take it, make it your own, use what you want, toss the rest, and ultimately be the very best you can be.

#### **Behaviors For Taking Charge**

- Be assertive just enough but not aggressive. Aggressive, especially for women comes across as being bossy and bitchy.
- Talk more than others, but not the whole time. People who talk first and most are usually seen as the leader and the most influential.
- Cross your arms when you talk about something important. Crossing your arms sends a message of confidence. But only do this when there is a decision to be made or controversial subject to be discussed.
- Use positive self-talk. People who make encouraging statements to themselves maintain the highest levels of performance. If you are getting ready to stand up in front of a group, take a deep breath and say, I can do this, I've prepared myself for this moment.
- If you are not sure whether to sit down or stand up, stand up – This is especially crucial if you are a new leader. Standing up signals you are in charge and encourage others to accept your authority. If you sit, sit at the head of the table.
- Give away some of power or status, but make sure everyone knows it was your choice.

#### **Bringing Out The Best**

- Look for energizers to support you. High performers create enthusiasm for things. They create energy, and even though this is intangible it generates high performance and gets other people engaged in and supportive of what they are doing.
- People can affect the energy and enthusiasm we have at work in various ways. Interactions with some people can leave you feeling drained while others can leave you feeling enthused about possibilities. Know this is a predictor of high performance.

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- The most successful teams and organizations have networks filled with interconnected energizers. All create energy and optimism about the possibilities ahead. Energizers are engaging, they value others' ideas, and they help people feel as if they are making progress.
- Focus on the small, loving details. Organizations are filled with time-consuming and distracting routines that are burdensome. In meeting deadlines, going to meetings, and getting through red tape, more important things can fall through the cracks. Allocate a small amount of time showing people that you care, and even love them. It could be through food, fun, or favors – whatever it takes to make them feel cared for in a sincere way.
- Build up their confidence. The power of believing that good things will happen to your team, and communicating that to them is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You can spark performance by expressing confidence.
- Protect yourself from the energy suckers. When the people you are working with are emotionally depleted, they stop focusing on their jobs. If you find that there are a few employees who are so unpleasant that, day after day, they sap the energy you need to inspire others and feel good about your own job – advice – get rid of them if you can and if you can't – spend as little time around them as possible.
- If you can't escape the downers you supervise or work with, do what you have to do, but train yourself to care less about them. Save your passion and creativity for those people who will benefit from it and who leave you feeling charged up rather than drained. Developing the fine art of indifference and emotional detachment is part of becoming a great leader.
- Be repetitive and concrete – In times of pressure – find a chant that represents the organizational message. A great example was “Miracle on the Hudson.” The crew chanted in unison to passengers – “brace, brace, heads down, stay down” over and over. The things you say over and over have the most impact if they specify what to do and when to do it. Don't underestimate the power of concreteness. Keep it simple and short, so people can remember it.

#### **Get Down to the Nitty Gritty**

- Always remember that grit gets you there. It is a predictor of great success. Grit is the perseverance and passion toward long-term goals.
- Albert Einstein saw himself as gritty rather than brilliant and said, “It's not that I am so smart, it is just that I stay with my problems longer.”
- Grit means that you work persistently toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress.
- The gritty leader approaches achievement as a marathon – the advantage is stamina.
- Great leaders instill grit in followers. They press themselves and others to move forward.
- Gritty leaders create a sense of urgency without acting as if everything is one long emergency.

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- To be a successful leader, you have to convince people that your words and deeds pack a punch. If they don't believe you are in charge, your job will be impossible to do and your life will be hell.
- When your teams does good work, you normally get more credit than you deserve. To be seen as competent, the team needs to believe there is a strong link between their actions and performance. People want to oversee, work for, and patronize winners. It comforts and calms them to believe the leader is in control.
- Give your team more credit than you believe they deserve. Everyone wins if you can bring yourself to give your people as much credit as possible and take as little as possible. You get tons of credit anyway because you are the leader. Your people will see you as more truthful and you will be admired (especially by outsiders) for your modesty and generosity.
- Take steps to magnify the illusion that you are in control. By enhancing the illusion you are in control, leaders increase their actual control over what their followers do, how they feel along the way, and how glowingly their work is evaluated by outsiders.
- Decisions and prioritization doesn't wait for the picture to be clarified. You have to make them when you have to make them. Someone has to decide and prioritize – it mine as well be you.
- You have to keep your own spirits up even if you don't know what you are doing. By acting as if you know what you are doing and are in control, even if it isn't true at first – confidence can inspire you and others to achieve great performance.
- Acting confident makes you feel confident – belief follows behavior. Confidence is important because like all emotions, it is contagious and will spread to followers.
- Be decisive. Say “yes,” “no,” or “I don't know.” Don't hesitate. You can always change your mind later. Nobody minds that. What they do mind is the agonizing over a decision.

When I think about the impact that you three will have in your lifetime, I am so inspired! There is no end to what you will accomplish and who you will influence. You are my greatest joy and accomplishment! I know you will be leaders in your careers and with your family and friends.

I love you more than all of the decisions you will make in your future, and all of the people that will follow you and look to you for inspiration. Love Mom