

Leadership Influence (August 27th) one hour
Wyoming Solid Waste Recycling Association, Sheridan WY

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Whether you are an executive, in HR, answering phones, or a sanitation engineer, it's your influence that has the greatest impact on leadership. Fifty years ago, leadership equaled authority. In 2019 and moving forward leadership equals **influence**.

Here is the biggest difference between leaders and followers:

Leaders **stretch** with challenges. Followers struggle with challenges. A leader is a problem solver. Effective, influential leadership involves a great deal of problem solving, dealing with discouragement, handling sensitive situations, being in a thankless job, and planning out an uncertain future.

Its when difficult problems arise, when we are just about ready to quit, that we shine *the most*, as leaders. It is our ability to rise after every loss, dust ourselves off, pick ourselves up, and get up the next morning with a smile on our face and a stride in our step, that sets us apart as leaders.

Qualities of a Leader

1 One: A leader thinks positively

2 Two: A leader has goals, writes down those goals, and creates an action plan to achieve them by a specific deadline

3 A leader has a well managed temper. They don't erupt. They zip it!

4 A leader doesn't quit easily. Quitters don't win; winners don't quit.

5 A leader is a problem solver. **Leaders don't cut strings, when they can untie knots.** Don't cut strings, when you can untie knots.

6 A leader takes *full* responsibility; they don't do the blame game.

7 A leader has the courage to step out, confidence to step up, and character to speak out. The Three "C"s of leadership. Courage, confidence, character.

8 A leader does what is best for the team, not just for him or herself.

9 Leaders know which battles to fight aggressively, and which battles to peacefully ignore. *Leaders pick their battles wisely.*

10 And finally, a leader has outstanding people skills.

Are leaders born?

Two: Do you have to have leadership qualities from the time you were child, and if you don't is it now too late to become a leader?

What are your thoughts? Let's open it up.

Answer to the first question: Sure leaders are born, I never knew an unborn leader. But I don't believe that we have to be **born** leaders. We can **become** leaders. Second question: The idea that we have to grow up with leadership qualities as a child, in order to have them as an adult, is a bunch of garbage. It is not true.

What do I mean by this? If you were taught as a child, that it is okay to lie, and this habit has brought destruction in your life now that you are fifty years old, don't ever think its too late to break the habit of lying. Today is the day to turn it around. *Now* is the time to turn that setback into a comeback and replace unhealthy habits and adopt healthy leadership skills- today. Its never too late.

One leader that *I* can think of, who played with *all* her might, was Mother Teresa, Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

One of Mother Teresa's signature customer service principles, was to leave people, places, and jobs, *better* than she found them. Mother Teresa never trashed someone else's life and left them in ashes. When she found human trash, she stooped picked up that person, and turned it into a human treasure. ***She picked up ashes and sparked them into a flame. Leaders do that. You see, it's easy to turn a flame into ashes. But leaders take ashes and spark it into a flame.***

Here is a true story that she encountered in Calcutta: *"One night, Mother Teresa was walking in the streets of Calcutta when she heard a moaning sound of someone in pain. She approached it, and there in a sewer, lay a man; his body was covered with worms. He was a human being, trashed in a sewer. Mother Theresa bent down picked him up and brought him to her home.*

She did not ask him his name; she did not ask him his religion, but most importantly, she did not ask who his health insurance carrier was...

Mother Teresa washed him, put medicine in his wounds, and comforted him. Later that night, he died in her arms. His last words to Mother Theresa: "I have lived like an *a-nimal*. I am dying like an angel."

Here, was a seventy two year old man, who felt unwanted, unloved, and uncared for, his whole life. In that final hour of his life, Mother Teresa altered the lens, through which he saw his whole life.

Each and every one of you on this beautiful day of august 27th in Sheridan, Wyoming, have the potential to alter, the lens through which you might see *your own* life, to alter the lens in how you see other people's lives, to alter the lens in how you influence others, for the better.

Imprints of Mother Teresa

In a way, each and every one of you representing the Solid Waste and Recycling Association for the exotic state of Wyoming, is an imprint of Mother Teresa.... *PAUSE for few seconds.*

Here is why... Mother Teresa worked in the waste and recycling association- of human beings. She was a sanitation engineer, who worked in human waste management. She picked up human trash and transformed them into human treasures. She picked up the ugly and transformed it into something pretty. Each and every one of you, is an imprint of what Mother Teresa did, for a living. You pick up the ugly stuff and you keep Wyoming pretty. You take recyclable material and make it into something valuable. Like Mother Teresa, you are making the world, a better, prettier, place.

Take pride in what you do for a living. Not shame, but pride.

Someday Isle

Don't wait for some great deed that you want to do someday, to call yourself a leader. Don't land yourself in that someday isle. *That perfect someday might never come.* That perfect, some day, is today. Right here at the Holiday Inn, in beautiful Sheridan Wyoming, August 27th, 10:00am.

Brighten the corner, where you are today. If you are driving the truck to pick up the trash, do it right. Get it right the first time. If you are answering phone for customers from hell, do it with a cheery voice. If you are creating notes for the morning meeting, do it the best that you can. Do It.

Some of you may not feel gung ho about your jobs today. You get up in the morning, saying its just another lousy day to pay my bills...

Let's change that dynamic - now.

How?

1 Change the lens in how you see your job. Only you can do that.

2 Yesterday is gone. No matter what someone told you in the past, see yourself as worthy-today.

3 See your job as being something important.

4 Be faithful in the small tasks.

Leaders recognize a problem, *before* it becomes a crisis. Crisis decisions, are never good decisions. This works in our personal lives, this works in our professional lives. I look at some of the decisions I made in crisis made, and they had disastrous consequences that spilled into the next ten years of my life.

Leaders anticipate the crisis, *before* it happens. If you know that one of your techs is going to quit, prepare for that in advance. Put a temporary hiring sign post on LinkedIn- ahead of time. Don't wait till one day you show up for work, and the tech has quit and there is no backup plan and you hire someone who is going to cause serious problems, or you have to do his job, for the next two years.

By anticipating the crisis, *before it happens*, you spend more time *preparing*, less time *repairing*. When we are repairing, we are looking backwards; when we are preparing, we are looking forwards. Think of the windshield and rear view mirror. The windshield is twenty times larger than the rear view mirror. We move forward, preparing, occasionally looking backwards, the rear view mirror, to make sure we don't repeat those same mistakes. Influential leaders spend more time preparing, less time repairing.

Effective leaders give *more than they promise*. Going the extra mile is the best customer service you can give, to creating a returning customer, to retaining a loyal workforce, and to creating that *aura*, of making people wanting to be around you. Give more than you promise, by sending that employee a thank you card for working late on a project. You never know- he or she may never have received a thank you note in his lifetime. Did you know, there are some people, who will go through their entire lives, without ever receiving a thank you note for anything? This is how you become a leader- in small day to day things. Go the extra mile and send that employee a thank you note. Here is another tip to going the extra mile: Handwrite the address. Lick the stamp. Don't run it through the machine. That is how you give the personal touch.

Here are some Daily Practical Examples for you to exercise creative, influential leadership, at work, at home, in the community.

1 Pay attention to your Smartphone. When an employee walks into your office and is talking to you, put your i-phone on silent mode or put it away all together. How is this a sign of leadership? You are exercising an *active listening skill*. *Wherever you are, be there. Give it your best shot.*

If you know that this employee is going to take five hours set a boundary, say, "I am expecting a phone call in twenty minutes, that is why I have my phone turned on, but the ringer is off." Say this ahead of time. That's exercising your leadership skills in phone diplomacy

2 Learn to attack the problem not the person. There is an employee who spends 40% of company time on social media. How do *you* exercise creative influential leadership? Don't attack the person, attack the problem. You can say "I like you, Michelle I don't like your doing social media on company time." You can apply this principle in your personal life: "I love you Mom. I don't like your drinking in excess." I love you Sis, I don't like your choice of men."

3 Leadership skills in your e-mail etiquette.

Have an outgoing signature. If it is an e-mail that needs a response, don't push it off. Respond right away- if that is the right thing to do. If it is a problematic e-mail that's going to eat into your mind all day, my suggestion is to get it off your back first thing, so that it does not eat into the quality of every single thing you do the rest of that day. Get that monkey off your back. If it is an e-mail that requires a "no," say it, and don't leave someone hanging. If you are out of town, set the auto reply. Some e-mails, ignore them altogether.

4 *Leadership skills in your digital footprint.* Pause before you hit Post. Think before you hit Send. People can forward your Post to 200 other contacts and in an instant your reputation can change.

Next, Leaders practice effective time management by deciding which method of communication works the best, for which situation.

Decide if e-mail, face to face meeting, a phone conversation, or silent treatment works best. If it makes sense to discuss the matter in a five minute phone conversation, *please* pick up the phone and make that call. The funny thing is we are all carrying these phones around us, but to have an actual phone conversation with someone, has almost become a dinosaur. It's like the phone is meant for everything else- except *talking*.

Have you had that experience, where you would rather exchange thirty eight meaningless e-mails, and sometimes, it is with someone in the next building, a few feet away, that could have been easily avoided, through a two minute phone conversation? I have, and its such a waste of time. Whenever someone has the courage to pick up the phone and talk to me directly about a work related matter, rather than exchanging fifty two e-mails over the course of six months, that person comes across as a leader who values my time, someone who understands what communication medium to use to suit which occasion. Sometimes the initial conversation is over the phone, and subsequent conversations are through e-mails. *Simply because everyone else is exchanging e-mails doesn't mean you have to.*

In our final five and half minutes of closing, I'd like to share an inspirational story with you.

What is this? A pencil. When was the last time you used one? Has the i-phone replaced it? Alright, some of you liars, I know you are hooked to the I phone...

Think of yourself to a pencil. First, with every single day, as you use the pencil, it only gets shorter. With every passing day, our lives only gets shorter. Use your time wisely. Manage your time effectively. Look at a day as a blank canvass. Are you going to leave it blank at the end of the day? Are you going to color it with pretty colors? *It's up to you.*

Second, your pencil writes your story. Each and every one of you, has a fascinating story to share. Don't ever think you are not important, don't ever think you are not worthy. Any place we are used, we leave our mark. *Write the best story that you can.* Wherever you are, be there. Give it your *best* shot. You may not get a second chance to re write your first story.

Third, this pencil has an eraser at the back. Mistakes are inevitable, unless you have lived so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all. I have made many mistakes, some of them HUGE ones that cannot be reversed, but can only be learnt as lessons. *Face it, to erase it.* Many of us, as leaders, make mistakes along the way,

sometimes because of our choosing, sometimes, because of choices others have made for us and now we cannot reverse them, and other times, because of choices others influenced us to make for their own fulfillment. Some mistakes, *can* be corrected along the way, not all, some. *If* we learn from our mistakes, they are not mistakes; they are lessons we can use to do better. **Don't count your losses; count your lessons.**

Fourth From time to time, a pencil, if it is to be useful, has to be sharpened. A blunt pencil is of no use to anyone. You know what it is like, when we reach out for a pencil from the pencil holder, and it is blunt? We don't spend sharpening it, we put it right back, and we reach out for another pencil, that has already been sharpened. A sharp pencil *can* be a painful one. But *if* we want to live to the fullest, we *must*, get sharpened. What are those sharpening experiences? Failed dreams, betrayal from people we once trusted, regrets, mistakes, people from hell to live with, credit card debt, being in a thankless job, are sharpening experiences that are painful learning lessons- if we handle them wisely. Don't wish for less problems, wish for more skills to handle your problems. Don't wish for less sharpening experiences, wish for more wisdom to handle those sharpening experiences.

So, what are the four things about this pencil? If you had not hit the snooze button on Preethi, you would remember...

We use the pencil to write our *best* story. As we write our best story, the pencil gets shorter. Sometimes, we make mistakes in the stories that we write. We use the eraser at the back to face those mistakes and to erase those mistakes when we can.. As the pencil gets used it gets blunt. So we sharpen it to *write a better story*.

You have been an **awesome** audience. Thanks Heather, Cindie, Wyoming Solid Waste and Recycling Association, and you wonderful folks. I hope something comes your way this fall.