

6 Mantras That Will Set You Apart as a Genuine Leader

Any strategy for success must include defining who you are as a leader, and then learning how it can set you apart from the rest.

By Lolly Daskal



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1 COMMENTS

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Editor's note: *"The First 90 Days" is a series about how to make 2016 a year of breakout growth for your business. Let us know how you're making the first 90 days count by joining the conversation on social media with the hashtag #Inc90Days.*

At the beginning of an enterprise, you may be looking to others to set an example you can follow--which is normal human behavior in any new situation. And there will be a lot you can learn from those who have come before you.

But none of them has ever been in your exact situation, and none of them brings your unique combination of skills, experience, ideas, and values.

Your real value as a leader will come when you begin to build on those traits and define the things that will set you apart from the rest.

Here are some thoughts to help launch you toward your own leadership league:

1. If you are your authentic self, you have no competition. If you are to be truly successful, your leadership must be grounded in self-awareness and authenticity. That means knowing and working with your strengths and your limits. When you lead from authenticity, you free yourself from the need for external approval--you can be who you are, not what others want to see.
2. Greatness is not where you stand, but in what direction you are moving. Strategic planning--the process of translating vision into realistic business strategies--provides you with a structure to balance long-term goals with immediate needs, update plans to reflect changing circumstances, and develop contingency plans for the wider range of possibilities. Your strategic plan is worthless unless you have a strategic vision. The two go hand in hand: Each is useless without the other.
3. If you focus on results, you will never change; if you focus on change, you will get results. From the very beginning, organizations need the capacity to grow and adapt. A positive view of change and the flexibility to adapt gives you the ability to weather what comes--and maybe even to influence it. As we know, change is inevitable, but turning it into progress requires preparation.
4. You don't build a business; you build relationships. Unless you are a one-person shop, you will be working with others. Those relationships form the core of your enterprise, and for them to be successful you need to be prepared to coach, guide, encourage, and reward those who are working with you--not just in their work but in their own growth and development.
5. Leadership is not wielding authority; it's empowering others. The best leaders keep their staff motivated and connected to the central mission. They delegate to employees effectively, provide opportunity, and act with fairness to create a culture of empowerment.
6. Commitment is what transforms words into reality. Your commitment to the purpose of your enterprise, as you express it and transmit it to those around you, is what leads to the creation of something new, something of value, in the world. It's not an easy goal, but it's definitely one worth working toward.

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