

BE THE KIND OF LEADER THAT YOU WOULD FOLLOW.

Good morning! "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential." Warren Bennis

I am perusing a book called, 'The Team Captain's Leadership Manual, by Jeff Janssen. I am fascinated by successful leaders and leadership and this book is pretty amazing in shaping the reader's mind to understand the development of responsible and respected leaders. It references to coaching and coaches, but aren't we all coaches and coaching individuals? You bet we are, every single day!

Let's think about leaders in our lives and what they have meant to us. We have a very deep respect for them as well as a strong emotional bond. They are people that have had a significant impact in our lives. In my case, I would not be the person I am today without that impact of their guidance, support, challenge, and leadership.

What is the ultimate goal of being a leader? It is to make those around us better. Funny thing is, leadership isn't really about us, true leadership is about individuals and what we can do to get them to consistently get to their potential. It is setting them up for success and being as happy for them when they succeed as when we do ourselves. When we help others succeed, everyone succeeds.

Our leadership has the ability to significantly impact the ultimate success of our class. We have the power to shape individual's mindset in many ways. We must create an atmosphere that is supported for success.

“People think it’s an easy thing to be a leader. It’s not. You have to earn the respect of your teammates. You have to be willing to challenge them as well as support them and you have to prove you are willing to do whatever it takes.” Larry Bird

Leadership is not always a cake walk. Earning the trust and respect from individuals takes a long time and with just the wrong word or action, that trust can be broken. Let me share a story of a student my teaching partner and I had. We were given a student that came to our district later in the year. He clearly came to us with a ton of misfortunes in his life. He had a very tough exterior and he had something to prove. Our job was to figure out how we were going to get past that tough exterior and teach him, earn his respect, and build a relationship. It was not easy. Every single day brought new challenges to the point we felt we needed to contact his mom. My partner said she would contact him since he was in her homeroom. We found out in a hurry, the teacher that contacted his mom would in his eyes broken that trust. The very next day, he came in with a vengeance. It was a very difficult path for the remainder of the year and no matter what she did, or how she worked with him, he wasn’t giving an inch. This shows us that even when we know we are doing what is best, in the eyes of that child, we had betrayed him.

Today, that student will stop by and talk with both of us, so even though he was so angry and felt we betrayed his trust, he realized that we both cared for him and only wanted what was best, but it took a long while before that happened. As we know, it is not always easy being a leader.

There are risks to being a leader, but we take that chance or we would not be in the children business. Most leaders have very specific qualities and I would bet any one of us would choose many of the qualities I list below...

1. Commitment
2. Confidence
3. Composure
4. Character
5. Team Builder
6. Encourager
7. Leader By Example
8. Listener

9. Mover and a Shaker

There are so many characteristics of great leaders and each of our lists may look a bit differently, but when it comes down to the heart of successful leadership, it is commitment to the craft and to becoming a better self!

We, as leaders, must be inspired and inspiring!

