
Essential Skills of Leadership

Lead with Vision, Integrity and Heart

Leadership is influence, not position. Develop practical strategies for Classified Professionals to build confidence, influence and strong teams through authentic connections.

Presented by Abby Sunday-

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Session Objectives

Building Team Relationships

Building Trust

Identify Your Circle of Influence

Thinking Win/Win Strategies

Strategies for
Effective Communication

Perception and Your Personal Paradigm

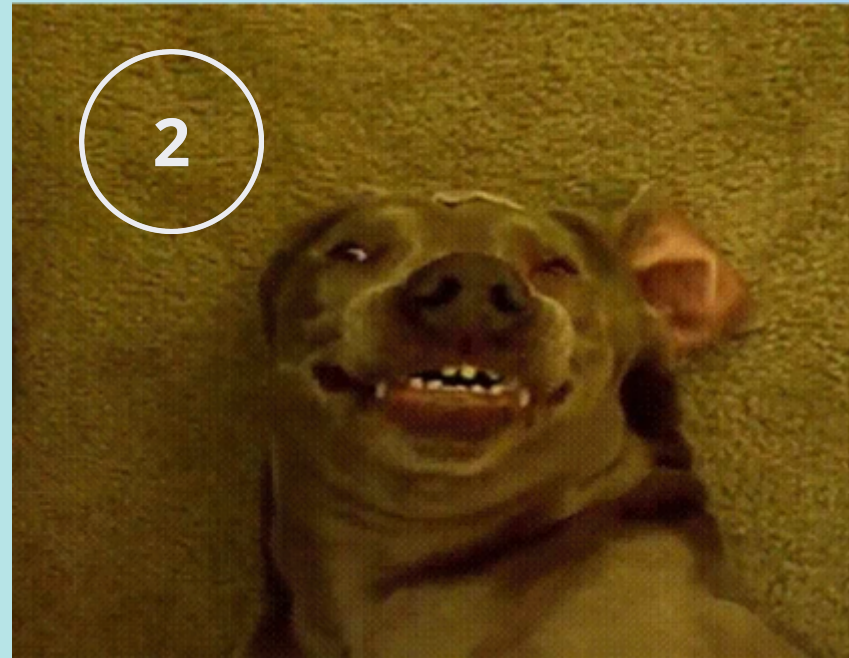
Proactive vs Reactive Leadership

Think Outside the Box

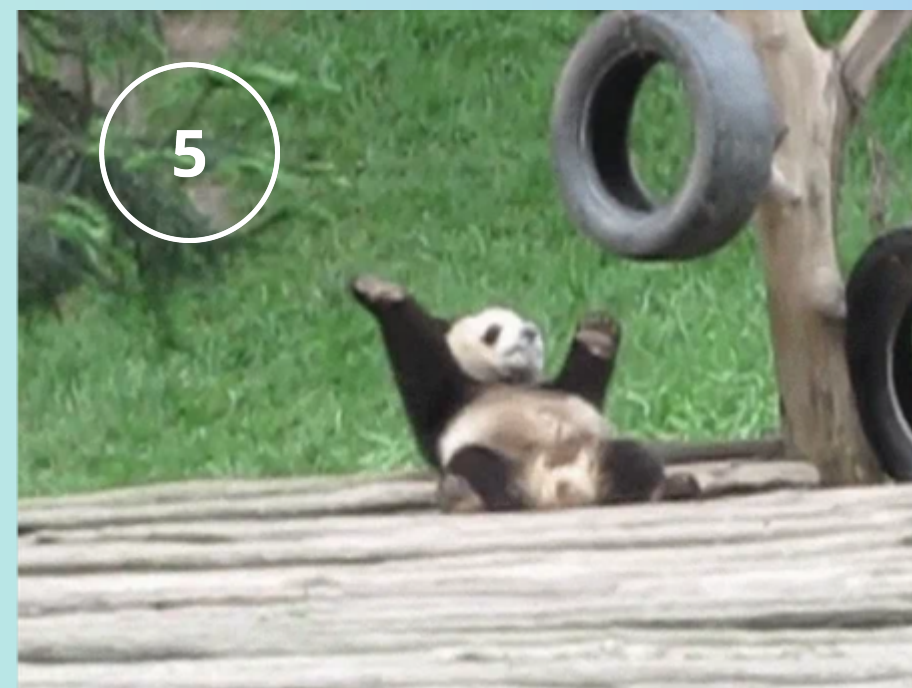
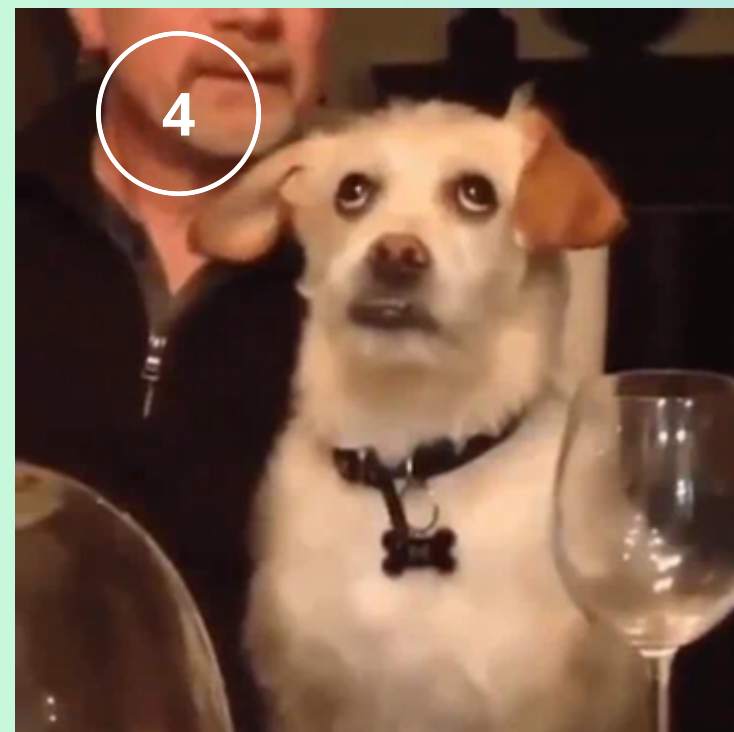
Mental Health- Renewal

Lead With Lasting Impact





Mood Meter-





Abby Sunday
Columbia College
Program Specialist Community/Adult Education

Education-

B.S. Sociology Arizona State University
M.A. Educational Counseling Stanislaus State

Classified Senate Participation-

Past Classified Senate President 2019-2021, 2023, 2025
Hiring Prioritization Chair
Fundraising Committee
Active Union Representative

Community and Fun Facts-

Non-profit sound production company, sing in a band, love to entertain, passionate about student advocacy, journaling, reading, cooking, love bright colors, unicorns and all things Hawaii! 🌴



Building Team Relationships

Why is it important to build strong relationships with your team?

Strong relationships foster trust, boost collaboration, reduce misunderstandings, and enhance team morale.

How do we do that?

Be honest, transparent and consistent.

Show up as a human first, leader second.

Invest time and effort into fostering team relationships.

Practical Approaches to Building Relationships

**Familiarize Yourself with Your Team. Take an Interest in Their Personal Lives.
Get to Know Them.**

Discover their hobbies, interests, and family dynamics.

Find out what matters to them, what they're currently learning, or if they play any sports.

People enjoy discussing their lives, so show authentic curiosity.

Prepare thoughtful questions to engage them in conversation.

Don't forget to share a bit about yourself as well.

Each interaction with another human being is an opportunity for relationship. - Craig and Patricia Neal

Building Team Relationships Continued

How Do We Dedicate Time and Energy to Nurturing Team Relationships?

Enhance connections with personal check-ins

Practice empathy- work to understand their emotions and perspectives

Organize regular events for your team to participate in. IE: Team meal together, team building activities, would you rather

Engage in activities together outside of scheduled meetings. IE: Lunch and Learn



Building Trust and Why It Matters Continued

Paulo Freire-

Trust is contingent upon ones true and concrete actions.

To say one thing and do another does not inspire or instill trust.

Deliver what you say you will. Trust is built by a person who delivers again and again.

Trust is established by dialogue.

Dialogue cannot exist without humility and should not be an act of arrogance.

Allowing each person to "name" and create dialogue in self expression freely is imperative.

When people feel seen, valued, and supported, they naturally contribute more, collaborate more openly, and bring forward innovative ideas.

Trust grows when leaders communicate, admit mistakes, and treat everyone with dignity.

Leadership without trust leads to:

Fear • Confusion • Silence • Dissent • Disrespect



Building Trust and Why It Matters

Trust is not given freely, it is earned.

Building trust is not a one-time action; it is a continuous effort made through presence, reliability, and care.

Strong leadership begins with trust and is built through consistent, intentional relationships.

A culture of trust allows teams to:

- Feel supported and respected
- Collaborate openly
- Take risks without fear
- Support one another through challenges
- Communicate clearly and honestly
- Show vulnerability when appropriate
- Empowers team to do thier best work
- Creates a sense of safety
- Encourages creativity and bold thinking



People will not get ahead with others unless they are willing to get behind them. - John Maxwell

Creating Clarity and Transparency

Anxiety thrives in the absence of clarity - Uncertainty thrives in the absence of transparency

- Teams thrive when everyone knows their role and how to show up.
- Clarity brings calm, direction, and unity, especially during times of change.
- A culture that's rich in transparency and trust leads to more innovative results.

How do we do that?

- Develop clear consistent expectations and follow them.
 - Be open and honest about your intentions and plans.
 - Identify issues as soon as you sense them.
- Practice regular transparent communication and predictable follow up.



Teams that operate with transparency and clarity are more likely to collaborate effectively and overcome challenges together.



Questions?

Circle of Influence-Locus of Control



Circle of Influence- the things you can affect directly.

Locus of Control- the degree to which an individual feels a sense of agency in regard to his or her life.

Someone with an internal locus of control will believe that the things that happen to them are greatly influenced by their own abilities, actions, or mistakes.

Ex: "I failed because I did not study enough." "I can get that promotion if I try."

External Locus of Control-other forces—such as random chance, environmental factors, or the actions of others—are more responsible for the events that occur in the individual's life.

Ex: "I failed because the test was unfair." "I won't get the promotion, they have better luck than I do."

Focus on what you can control.

Accept what is out of your control.

Focus on what you are responsible for.

Focus on where your influence can be effective.

Win-Win is a frame of mind that seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions.

Thinking Win-Win

1. Encourages solutions that will benefit the individual AND the entire team.

EX- What would success look like from both sides?

2. Encourages cooperation rather than competition.

3. Acknowledge others ideas and opinions.

4. Value others needs equally to your own.

5. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

6. Acknowledge others accomplishments and contributions. Gives credit where it is due.

7. Disagree respectfully if an agreeable solution cannot be found.

8. Respond with curiosity, not criticism.

It is amazing what can happen when it does not matter who gets the credit.

Jim Collins, Theodore Roosevelt, John Maxwell, Harry S. Truman



Effective Communication Strategies

**Clear communication is one of the most powerful tools a leader has.
It sets expectations, strengthens trust, and builds alignment across a team.**

When leaders communicate clearly, people feel confident, valued, and informed.

Communication should never be an afterthought—it is the core of effective leadership.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

- a. Practice empathetic listening
- b. Listen to concerns and feedback
- c. Repeat back to ensure you have understood all that the person is saying
- d. "This is what I heard you saying, is that correct? or "What I hear you saying is..."
- e. "Can you expand on that more? Help me to understand the context."

Activity/Practice to try with your team-

Choose a viewpoint different from your own and listen for understanding.

Write down 3 new perspectives you learned.



Effective Communication Strategies

Clear, consistant messaging

a. Clearly stating your purpose and intent helps you achieve it fully.

b. Unclear or inconsistent messaging causes stress, confusion and wasted effort.

c. Every message you share shapes how people understand your mission and their role in it.
Be clear in your message.

d. Messaging is not only verbal. Non-verbal ques =

i. 55% of communication is body language

ii. 38% tone of voice

iii. 7% words spoken





Questions?



Perception and Your Personal Paradigm

Who sees a young woman?



Who sees an old woman?

What do you see in this picture?



Perception and Your Personal Paradigm



Who is right?

Can two people see the exact same picture,
interpret it differently and both be right?



Perception and Your Personal Paradigm



YES!

It is not logical; it is psychological

Can two people disagree and both be right?

Perception and Your Personal Paradigm





Perception and Your Personal Paradigm



**Your perspective shapes the way you see what you see.
Our reality is determined by our perspective.**

We all carry mental maps in our heads.

We interpret everything we see and do through these mental maps.

We do not question these ideas and maps.

Map 1- The way things are, or reality.

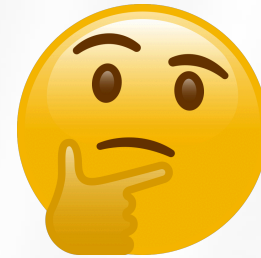
Map 2- The way things should be, or our values.

We assume that that the way we see things is the way they really are and the way they should be.



Right or Wrong?

Is There a Third Alternative?



Steps to achieving a Third Alternative-

Shift your perspective.

Don't get trapped in details.

Withhold criticism.

Focus on wins- explore alternatives that help everyone achieve wins.

Build on others ideas- combine ideas to make an even better one.

Set aside your ego and acknowledge that collective intelligence of all involved produces the best outcome.

Sometimes it may take a while to find a 3rd alternative.

Stick with it until you find a solution.

Activity

1. Think about a person who sees things differently than you do. Consider ways those differences might be used as stepping stones to a third alternative solution.

2. Identify a situation in which you desire greater teamwork and synergy.

3. What conditions need to exist to support synergy?
4. What can you do to create those conditions?

Think Outside the Box

Why Diversity Matters

1. Value differences- truly
 - a. "We see this differently. Great! Help me to see what you see."
 - b. It does not do you any good to surround yourself with everyone who agrees with you.
2. Tap into the strength of others-
 - a. We tend to under utilize peoples strengths where they can be their best and best serve the mission of the group.
 - b. What can you do to take better advantage of strengths within your group?
3. Invite push back-
 - a. This expands perspective
 - b. Avoids blind spots
 - c. Makes for sharper decisions
4. Stay open minded.
5. Be eager to learn and improve.
6. Be willing to follow-
 - a. Strong leaders aren't only defined by their charisma or ability to command—they're also distinguished by how well they follow.





Questions?



Proactive vs Reactive Leadership

Proactive

- Remain calm
- Practice pausing
- Focus on solutions
- Take initiative, and make it happen
- Think before acting
- Respond in principals of desired results
- Be a light, not a judge
- Be part of the solution, not the problem

EX: "I am free to choose and am ultimately responsible for my happiness."



Reactive

- Complain
- Blame others
- Act like a victim
- Get angry, lash out
- Allow outside influences (moods, feeling) to control their response.
- React based on feelings or circumstances
- Waste time on things they can't control
- Pass along negative energy

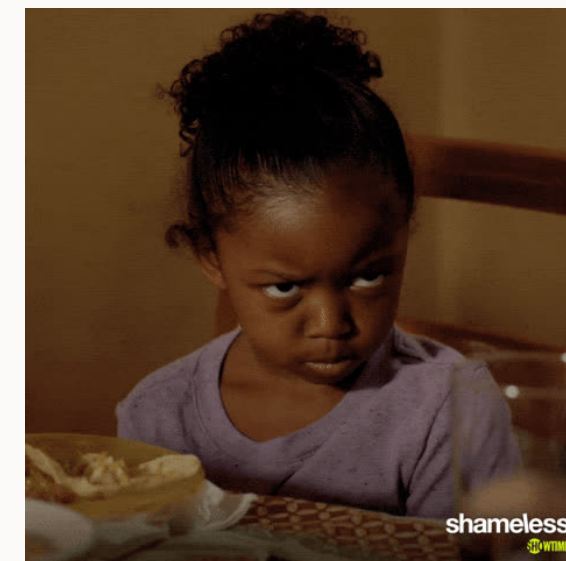
EX: "This is just the way things are and I cannot do anything about it."

☀ Proactive language is the language of leadership- Rajan Kaicker ☀

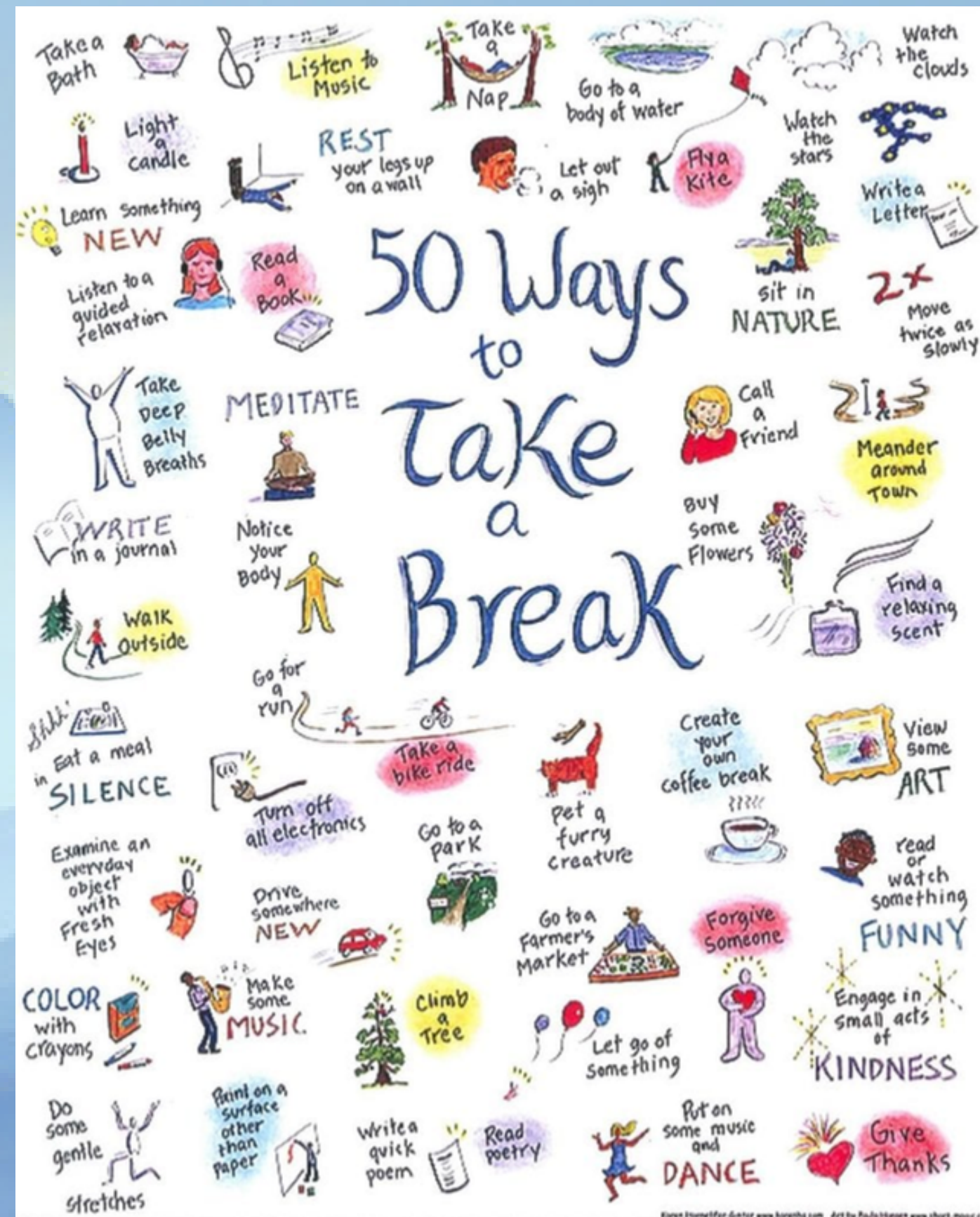
Proactive



Reactive



ChatGPT



What is one small action you can commit to this week to support your mental health?

Mental Health- Renewal

You cannot pour from an empty cup - effective leadership starts with personal well-being.



Caring for yourself allows you to show up fully for your team, your mission, your family, and your community.

How we care for ourselves models behavior for our teams.

Burnout impacts decision-making, communication, and relationships, not just productivity.

Self-awareness is a leadership skill—knowing when to pause is just as important as knowing when to push forward.

Renewal allows us to experience rest, growth, change and continuous improvement.

4 dimensions of renewal:

Physical- Exercise, nutrition, stress management, hiking

Mental- Reading, writing, planning, visualizing, creative inspirations

Spiritual- commitment, study, meditation, perspective, saint

Social/Emotional- service, empathy, synergy, connectedness, good friend



Lead with Lasting Impact



Impactful leaders think beyond their success and focus on building something that lasts.

1. Put systems into place that can be easily followed and duplicated.

2. Plant seeds of growth that will grow long after you are gone.

3. Know how to turn plans into results.

4. Make it a goal to:

- a. shape lives
- b. influence change
- c. inspire incoming leaders

5. Model desired behaviors:

- a. facilitating open communication
- b. addressing conflicts promptly
- c. practice consistency

True leadership is measured not by titles or recognition, but by the legacy you leave behind.

Recap

Effective leaders focus on:

What they can control and influence

Set and communicate clear goals and a shared vision

They identify the most important tasks for the biggest impact

Foster a cooperative environment that encourages both different perspectives and mutually beneficial solutions

Effective leaders value active listening, deep understanding, and continuous growth

Being proactive not reactive

Take time to reset and renew

Lead by example and model the behavior you want to see

A strong team looks like:

- Clear purpose
- Trusting relationships
- Open communication
- Shared ownership
- Diverse perspectives
- Problem-solving mindset
- Consistent support and appreciation

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Thank you

Consistency

Consistency builds trust

Deliver what you say you will. If you let them down, it will damage the relationship.

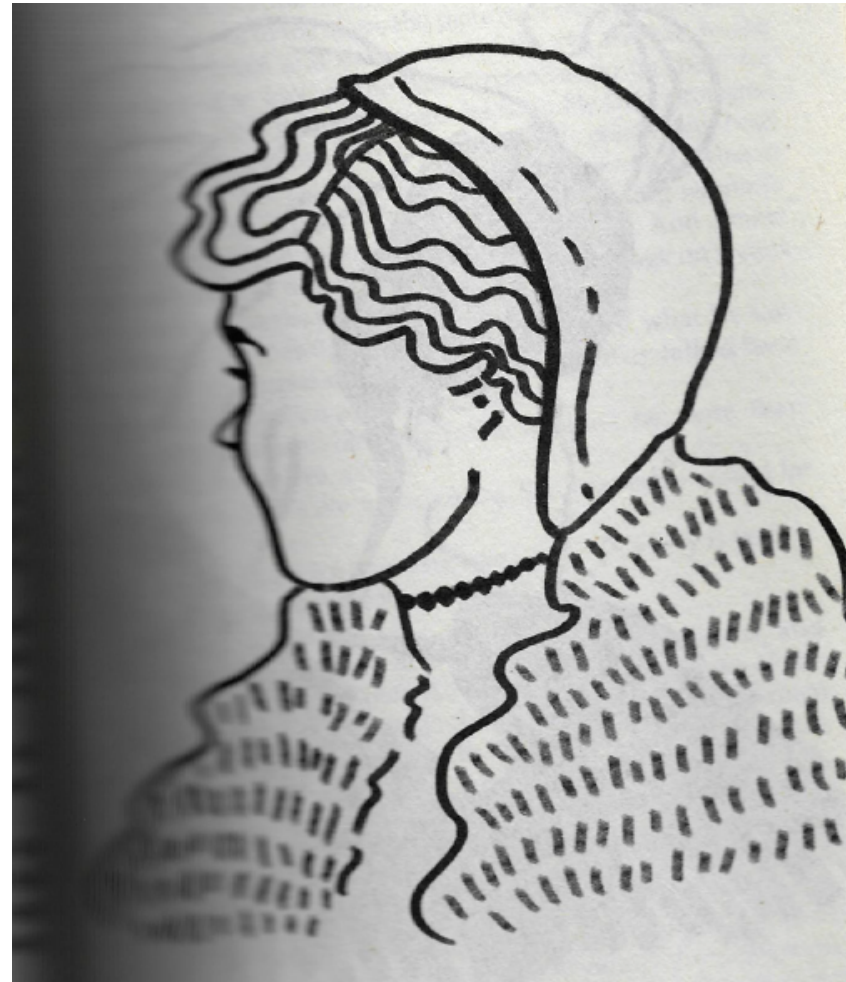
Delivering consistent expectations to your team, allows you to:

- Increase productivity
- Improve overall results
- Execute more influence within business
- Hold a higher standing in the team
- Your opinions will carry more weight with the group
- Colleagues are eager to work with you



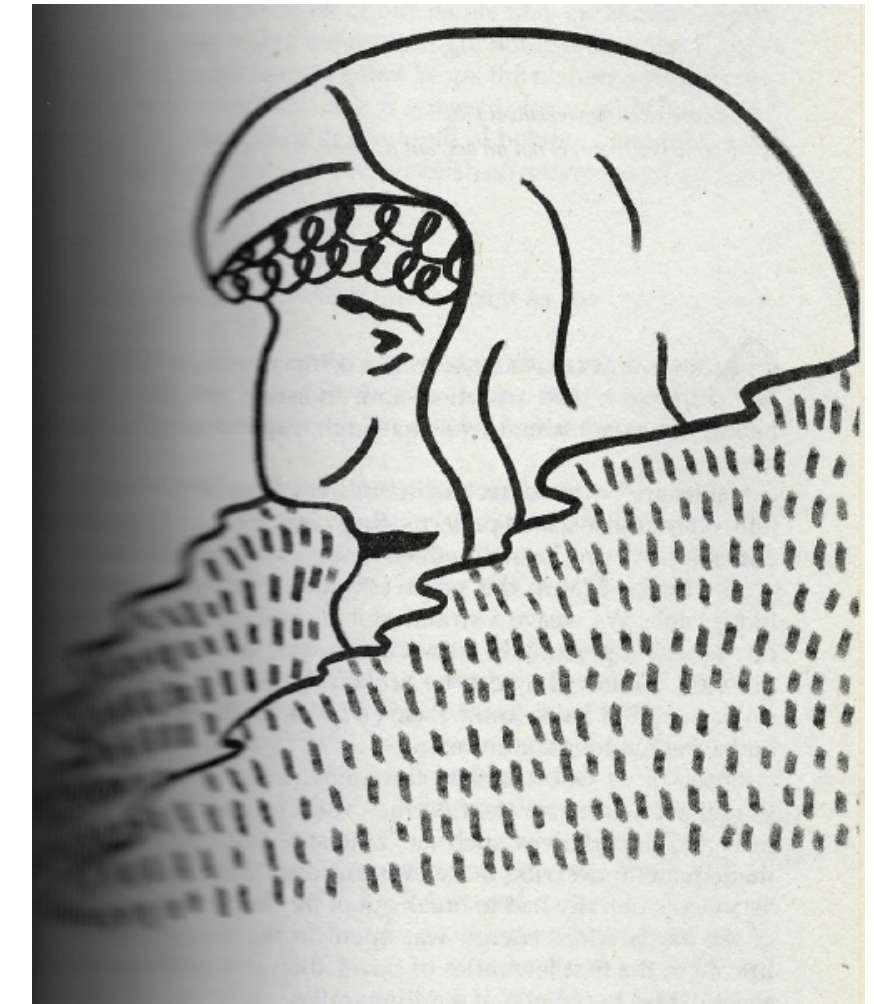
Can two people disagree and both be right?

Perception and Your Personal Paradigm



What do you see in this photo?
Do you see a old or young woman?
What is she wearing?

You see the world as you are.
Not as it is.



Build a team so strong that no one can point out the leader.

Building Team Relationships Continued

Be Positive and Uplifting

- Be the type of person you want to work with
- Be authentic
- Be yourself
- Practice reciprocity
- Be helpful
- Be respectful



RESPECT

Thinking Win-Win

Practice Abundance Mentality

- There is plenty out there for everyone and more to spare.
- Consider others wins as your own.
- One's personal success is not achieved at the expense of others.



Practice the Golden Rule-

Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.

Treat others with the same dignity and respect you would show yourself.

Do not do anything to anyone that you would not want done to you.

Let's work together to come up with something even better than either of us had in mind.



Creating Synergy within the Team

Cooperation

- Be willing to work with others
- Don't solve every problem alone
- Expand others influence
- Explore multiple ideas. Even the wild ones!
- Be interested in finding the best way, not having it your own way

Individual Synergy

- Check your ego
- Clarify outcomes
- Provide and alternate solution
- Think innovatively and creatively in problem solving

Joint Goals

- Have a common goal in mind
- Create shared goals
- Keep the end goal in mind
- Work towards a mutual purpose
- Agree on what success looks like

Questions to determine if synergy is present in your situation:

What is the end in mind?

What are everyone's wins?

What are the alternative options and/or wild ideas?

Choose your own way * Take responsibility for the results * Empower your team

Lead with Lasting Impact Continued

Purpose Driven Leadership

- Creates lasting impact.
- Focus on purpose, not personal credit.
- When you lead with purpose, others feel inspired to do the same.
- Leadership grounded in honesty and character builds lasting influence.

Integrity

- Integrity is about being the same person in every situation, whether people are watching or not.
- Integrity is the foundation that every lasting leader must build upon.
- When your values guide your words, decisions, and behavior, people can trust you fully.



Impact



Mission



Inspiration



Leader



Collaboration



Diversity



Equality