



Leadership Development

Anywhere, Anytime

Practical Tips for School Leaders – #44

September 15, 2020

Today's leadership tip is a reminder for each one of us on the power of reflective practice. Why are these skills important? How do you assess your ability in each of the recommended processes? In relationships within the building, how would the faculty and staff rate your skill in each of the process areas?

7 WAYS TO IMPROVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

You're the boss of a company. Lately you've noticed that the work is being completed at a steady pace, but you're noticing a lack of enthusiasm from your team. What do you do? Your first thought might be to talk to your employees, but in truth, the first conversation you should have is with yourself. As a leader, you should look inward and focus on your own abilities and shortcomings and ask yourself how you can find ways to empower and inspire your team. Here are some ways to turn the conversation inward and focus on developing leadership skills:

1. BE PASSIONATE

No one wants to seek counsel from someone who doesn't care about the topic as much or more than they do. Passion is effort; passion is exertion. Passion is never giving up. Without it, you cease innovating and stagnate. When you display authentic enthusiasm and passion for the end result, your people will keep moving toward their goals.

Employees respond to those who are eager to help them learn and grow. Show passion for everything you do, including in your pursuit in learning how to develop leadership skills. Your desire will be clear to your employees, and [inspire them to improve leadership skills](#), too.

2. MODEL GREAT LEADERSHIP FOR OTHERS

People respect someone who walks the walk. Research supports this statement; a core characteristic of transformational leaders is the [ability to be a role model](#). Show those around you exactly what you'd like to see them do. Don't waver on this. The strongest message you can send to your team is to model the behaviors you'd like to see. "If they can do this," your team will think, "So can I."

3. UNDERSTAND YOUR STRENGTHS AND USE THEM

No leader is born with everything necessary to succeed. It takes time and effort to improve leadership skills, and it begins with a thorough examination of your strengths and weaknesses. A strong knowledge of your innate gifts and abilities means you can put them to work for you, while an understanding of your weaknesses provides you with areas you know you can improve. Addressing your shortcomings leads to true growth.

4. SET CONCRETE GOALS AND EXECUTE THEM

Even the most formidable leaders don't come up with success out of nowhere. The grandest vision will never get off the ground if you don't plot a path to get there. [Invest time in clarifying your goals and solidifying them](#). Formulating the right plan and setting meaningful [benchmarks](#) along the way gives you a map to follow, a methodology that will guide your business through the next week, month, year and decade. Once you [achieve a particular goal](#), look toward another; constant striving to meet that next benchmark will give you and your employees a sense of meaning and pride.

5. ADMIT WHEN YOU FAIL AND MOVE ON

Even the most powerful, inspiring leaders make mistakes. When you recognize an error, admit it openly and take action to correct it. Be open about your failures; discuss them with yourself and with your team. Learn from them. Ask yourself and your team, "How can I avoid making this mistake in the future?" [Learning from your failures](#) sends a powerful message to those around you. They understand that you will lead well even when you make a mistake. Those wondering how to improve leadership skills should learn how to recognize successes and failures.

6. MOTIVATE OTHERS

If you're complaining about every little detail and can only see the worst-case scenario at the end of every plan, you have little chance of inspiring others. [Motivation is an extension of belief](#); if you say, "No, that won't work" or "why bother?" to an employee, you're signaling to them that you do not believe in their idea, in them or even in the business itself. An employee who feels you do not believe in them will not perform well and can even create a domino effect of poor morale across the business. Instead, believe in others and what they are capable of. Inspire and motivate them to work harder and reach greater heights. Improve leadership skills throughout your business by generating and focusing positive energy, even when things aren't going according to plan.

7. FIND YOUR HIGHER PURPOSE

When developing leadership skills, it is essential that you know why you're putting time and effort into your chosen goal. [What drives you](#)? Your immediate response may be simple: A larger paycheck from a job well done or the prestige that comes from higher rank. But step back for a moment. Why do you want that larger paycheck? Is it so your family feels more secure? Perhaps you want to lead because you feel you can help others by developing products and services that they need, or you see a place where you can cause positive change in your industry. These are all higher purposes, and by [identifying your own](#), you can better operate as a [confident](#), knowledgeable and empowering leader for others.

As you hone your effectiveness as a leader in your own life – whether that's in a professional or personal capacity – you'll strengthen the efforts you put into your own goals. Those around you will see the hard work and passion you bring to the table each day, stirring them to develop leadership skills, too.

Robbins, Tony. Posted by Team Tony, Leadership and Impact, 2019.