

Leadership *matters*

daily insights to inspire extraordinary results

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why

Leadership Matters



At the beginning of the day, it's all about possibilities. At the end of the day, it's all about results. But in today's ultra-competitive marketplace, good results aren't good enough. To win, you need to produce extraordinary results. Extraordinary results come from extraordinarily performing teams. And where there is an extraordinary team, you can bet there is an inspiring leader. That's why leadership – specifically, *your* leadership – matters.

Leadership matters because extraordinarily performing teams are the ultimate advantage for any organization – a business, a non-profit, a sports team, or a family for that matter. New or unique products or services might get you

into the game, but only your team can deliver victory and create a “wall” that is higher and harder for your competitors to climb.

Leadership matters ... right now, today ... no matter what situation you find yourself in. Whether you lead a team of one or a team of 100, leadership matters. Whether you lead at home, at the office, in one city or across the globe, leadership matters. It matters when you are on the front lines of an organization and as you work your way up to the very top. It matters in an up economy or a down economy, in a start-up or a mature business, in local business or a global enterprise.

Inspiring leadership is the single biggest factor in achieving extraordinary results. It might be hard to believe that one factor can have such a profound impact on performance, but our daily experiences – as well as plenty of research – prove it over and over again. A recent study of 30,000 leaders found that the top 10 percent of leaders generated twice the net income as the middle 80 percent. The study also identified one critical competency that distinguished the top 10th percentile of leaders from the rest: the ability to inspire and motivate others to high performance. These findings demonstrate that inspiring leadership is directly linked with both employee engagement and productivity. In fact, the researchers stated, “... in

addition to the responsibilities outlined in their job descriptions, [leaders] need to inspire and motivate people if the company is to succeed.”¹

This book presents 31 matters of leadership. The topics are presented in a rapid-read, daily format designed for today’s information-rich, time-poor world. For easy reference, they are organized in alphabetical order.

At the end of each daily topic, you will find brief questions to help you bridge the gap between insight and application. There is great power in converting your thoughts into words, so be sure to write down your responses to each question. Then, turn your words into action that same day. To support your action, you can access free tools – just scan the QR codes at the end of selected chapters or visit theLgroup.com/LeadershipMatters.

Leadership Matters was written to inspire you to elevate your leadership so that you, in turn, can inspire your team. Imagine the possibilities if your team could consistently achieve extraordinary results ...

- What would it mean for your organization?
- What would it mean for your team?
- What would it mean for you and your career?

¹How Extraordinary Leaders Double Profits, Jack Zenger, Joe Folkman and Scott Edinger, 2010

Let's get started and find out. Your team is depending on you ... because your leadership matters!

"Everything rises and falls on leadership. Leadership is the difference maker and the deal breaker. It's how we grow organizations. It's how we impact lives. But leadership cannot be an idea we simply talk about. Leadership is the action we must live out."

– JOHN MAXWELL

day 1

Appreciation



William James, the father of psychology, stated that the most fundamental psychological need is to be appreciated. We all want to feel fully appreciated for our work. The payoff for inspiring leaders is that **people do more for those who appreciate them.**

Although leaders widely recognize the need for appreciation, it tends to be a blind spot. That is, we generally believe we are much more appreciative of our team than our team thinks we are. For example, I think I am more appreciative of my wife than she feels appreciated by me. The same can be said of most leaders and team members. The reason is

that we often do not convert our invisible thoughts of appreciation into visible acts of appreciation.

With all of today's technology options, it's easy to find ourselves too busy for face-to-face interaction, but that's one of the best ways to charge up our teams. **Showing appreciation is not a matter of time and intention; rather, it's a matter of priority and action.**

Research by former Gallup chairman, the late Donald Clifton, revealed that workgroups with at least a 3-to-1 ratio of positive to negative interactions were significantly more productive than those having less than a 3-to-1 ratio. In other words, more productive teams had at least three positive interactions for every one negative interaction. By the way, the same study showed the bar was set even higher for more successful marriages – the key ratio was 5-to-1. Showing your appreciation is certainly a positive interaction and is a simple way to boost your ratio.

Consider tracking your ratio for a week to gauge how well you are appreciating your team. Look for opportunities to **acknowledge your team's results and positive progress.** This is basic psychology – reinforce those behaviors that you want to see more frequently. Catch them doing something right ... and do it often. If you look for your

team doing something right, opportunities to reinforce them will be plentiful. The key is to be sincere and specific. In other words, don't fall into the trap of blurting out the robotic "Good job". Take the time to thoughtfully explain why you appreciated the specific action taken by a team member. For example, you might say, "Kayla, I really appreciate the way you quickly resolved that customer issue without adding more time or cost to our delivery schedule. That makes a big difference for the company."

Demonstrating appreciation for your team and their efforts can put them on the fast track to inspired performance. There should be plenty of opportunities since a Harris poll found that **65 percent of the workers reported receiving no recognition for good work in the past year!** That's a pretty low bar. So, we should not worry about recognizing our teams too much. In fact, there are no documented studies of any team ever feeling over-appreciated.

Here are some simple ways to make recognition a defining moment for your team:

- Say "Thank You!" – An all-too-obvious, yet highly underused, form of appreciation.
- Go old school and write a card or note to a team member expressing why you appreciate him or her.

- Allow your team to present their work to your boss. This is a great way to engage your team, and it also shows your boss what kind of leader you are.
- Offer team members a choice of projects on which to work. When team members buy into a project, they will put their hearts into it.
- Put a sincere acknowledgement in your company or department newsletter. This takes only a few minutes of your time but creates long-term “trophy value” for the employee.
- Tell an employee’s story of accomplishment at a staff meeting. Detailed stories are perceived as more interesting, meaningful, thoughtful and memorable.
- Take a team member to lunch to show your appreciation. Remember to do more listening than talking.

Find ways that are natural and comfortable for you to demonstrate your appreciation since **your authenticity is the key**. The good news is that we have complete control over our appreciation. No budget limitations or excuses here – there are literally thousands of ways to demonstrate our appreciation at little or no cost.

What is the positive-to-negative ratio on my team?

What one thought of appreciation can I convert into a tangible act of appreciation today?

“There is more hunger for
love and appreciation
in this world than for bread.”

– MOTHER TERESA



day 2

Attention



Time is a great equalizer; it runs at the same speed for everybody, rich or poor, jet pilot or snail farmer. You can't manufacture time, you can't reproduce time, you can't slow time down or turn it around and make it run in the other direction. As the saying goes, "life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end, the faster it goes."

We cannot really manage time, but we can manage our attention. Attention is a resource we all possess. Your attention reflects your conscious decisions about which activities will occupy your time. You are where your attention is ... not necessarily where your body is. Whereas **time is the great equalizer**, **attention is the great differentiator**.

Once we are made aware of something in our environment, if we pay attention to it, we will see more of it. For example, when was the last time you saw a yellow car? Maybe yesterday or last week? Now, if you live in New York City, you see hundreds of yellow taxis daily. Even still, you can look for yellow cars that are not taxis.

Now that I have made you aware of yellow cars, you will start seeing more yellow cars in the following days. Has there been a sudden invasion of bright yellow cars? Of course not. They've been there all along. The difference is, now you are aware of them – you have a heightened awareness of yellow cars. I call this connection between heightened awareness and more frequent sightings *The Yellow Car Phenomenon*.

The first time I became aware of *The Yellow Car Phenomenon* was when my wife was pregnant with our first child. We spent our weekends driving from store to store shopping for all that wonderful baby stuff. Then at lunch at work the next week, I looked around and thought to myself, “Oh my goodness, there must be something in the water here in Dallas. Everyone is pregnant!” No doubt, I had breezed by hundreds of expectant mothers before, never paying much attention. Now that my wife was pregnant, it seemed that everyone else was also. Amazing!

It's the power of personal attention. If your mind is ready to pay attention to something – new people you want to meet, selling opportunities, new applications for an old product, ways to save money, new markets to enter, chances to learn a new skill, ways to generate more income – you will start seeing more of it. These things have always been there, but now you're paying attention to them. **When you change the way you look at things, things change the way they look.**

Instead of paying attention to every single piece of information in our stimulus-rich world, if we really look for those things we want in our team, business or family, that's exactly what we will find. Keeping the *Yellow Car Phenomenon* in mind, if we pay attention to the positive, we see positive. For example:

Look for...	See...
<input type="radio"/> Humor	<input type="radio"/> Life as comedy
<input type="radio"/> Signs of positive progress	<input type="radio"/> Good performance to recognize
<input type="radio"/> Cooperation	<input type="radio"/> Teamwork
<input type="radio"/> Opportunities to coach	<input type="radio"/> Coachable moments

On the other hand, if we look for negative things, that's what we will see more of:

Look for...	See...
<input type="radio"/> Drama	<input type="radio"/> Dysfunctional team
<input type="radio"/> Mistakes	<input type="radio"/> Underperformers and frustration
<input type="radio"/> Hidden agendas	<input type="radio"/> Selfish behavior

It's the power of our attention. For proof, just count how many yellow cars you notice tomorrow.

Where do I tend to focus my attention during the day?

Where do I need to focus my attention in order to inspire myself? My team? My family?

What “yellow car” am I paying attention to this week?

“You can become blind by seeing each day as a similar one. Each day is a different one, each day brings a miracle of its own.

It’s just a matter of paying attention to this miracle.”

– PAULO COELHO