



The answer to the fundamental leadership question "Is it better to be loved or feared?" is loved. Science confirms it. With these 6 principles, love is operationalized:

### **#1 Effective Not Right**

**What to do:** Stop being Right. Start being Effective. **Nothing you can do as a leader is more important.**

**Why to do it:** The outcome of judgement-based leadership is compliance, high friction, and turnover. The outcome of Love Operationalized is ownership and systemic resilience.

**The psychology behind it:** You have every moral right to be frustrated. When a worker fails to deliver, the "Right" response is judgment. But being "Right" is expensive. It triggers fear, shuts down creativity, and leads to the 70% disengagement rate we see globally. A loving, strengths-based approach reverses this and engages workers.

### **#2 Theirs Not Yours**

**What to do:** Gain an understand of your worker's purpose first, and then show them how serving the organization's purpose will contribute to it.

**Why to do it:** You are reducing friction. When a worker's goals and the company's goals are misaligned, energy is wasted on cognitive dissonance. Alignment creates a superposition where every ounce of effort serves two masters simultaneously.

**The psychology behind it:** This leverages Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Humans have an innate need for autonomy. When a task is framed as a vehicle for the worker's purpose, the motivation shifts from extrinsic (doing it for a paycheck) to intrinsic (doing it for self-actualization).

### #3 Strengths Not Weaknesses

**What to do:** Focus exclusively on workers' strengths.

**Why to do it:** Fixing a weakness only brings a worker to average, which is a low-ceiling investment. Doubling down on a strength creates exponential returns. From a leadership perspective, you are optimizing the load bearing parts of the human architecture.

**The psychology behind it:** Based on Positive Psychology (Clifton Strengths). Neuroplasticity tells us that we have more room for growth in areas where we already have dense neural pathways.

### #4 Measurement Not Judgement

**What to do:** Measure every worker's performance; judge no one.

**Why to do it:** Measurement provides objective data. By removing the ego of the manager, you turn the relationship from an adversarial one (Judge vs. Defendant) into a collaborative one (Two Engineers looking at a dashboard).

**The psychology behind it:** This addresses psychological safety. When a worker feels judged, the amygdala triggers a fight-or-flight response, which shuts down the prefrontal cortex (the part of the brain responsible for logic and creativity).

### #5 Skill Not Will

**What to do:** Focus on workers' skill rather than their will.

**Why to do it:** If you assume a lack of "will," the only solution is punishment or replacement (high cost). If you assume a lack of "skill," the solution is calibration (coaching). It keeps the manager in a problem-solving state rather than one of resentment.

**The psychology behind it:** This combats the Fundamental Attribution Error—our tendency to blame someone's character ("they are lazy") rather than their circumstances or tools ("they lack the training").

### #6 Collaboration Not Direction

**What to do:** Allow your workers input into their work.

**Why to do it:** In any complex system, the worker has the most data about his or her immediate environment. By seeking input, you aren't just being nice; you are harvesting local data to improve the global system while simultaneously creating "skin in the game."

**The psychology behind it:** This utilizes the IKEA Effect—the cognitive bias where people place a disproportionately high value on products they helped create.

For help implementing these principles or to ask a question, please write to me,  
Mark Musgrave, at: [mdm@mdmaa.com](mailto:mdm@mdmaa.com)