



The Dirty Dozen

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We often read about what CEOs, leaders, bosses, and supervisors, should do, or possess as good leaders.

So what prompted me to write this post? I was speaking with a gentleman the other day, we were touring a new business facility which is about to open soon. We spoke about the upcoming holidays, our families, the new impressive facility, and then merged into business dialogue. He was an owner of a few businesses himself. What he and I began to talk about immediately and seamlessly, were people in organizations, and how important they were to achieving success for the organization, and that they were the number one asset! Everything the gentleman said was like music to my ears - all of which seemed so simple, yet some leaders fail to realize.

I have often said you can learn just as much from a bad boss then a good one. Why? Because many of us know what right looks like, how people are supposed to be treated, how they should be motivated, inspired, appreciated, et cetera. The list goes on and on right? So what I've done is some reverse thinking to illustrate a few points here. I've done this by recalling some of my own personal experiences along with some observations over the years. Let's call them *The Dirty Dozen*.

- **Do Not** proclaim yourself as a leader! How often do you hear *good leaders* say, "I am the leader, your leader, your Boss"? You can read all the books in the world on leadership and even write your own; this does not make you a leader. Credibility comes from proven leadership in action, period! What you should like to be hearing are *others* referring to you as a good or great leader. i.e., "*my boss is such a great leader because he/she...*" Now, I'm not saying it's bad for good leaders to refer to themselves as leaders. I hope you can make the distinction of my point.
- **Do Not** micro-manage or stifle talent! You or someone within the organization hired that person for a reason. Empower them to do their jobs. Provide them resources to do their job. Teach, coach and mentor, praise and encourage them and watch them shine. "*It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.*" - Steve Jobs
- **Do Not** talk down to people or rob them of their dignity and respect because perhaps you - a. Don't like them, b. You are threatened by their performance, c. That's how you were treated or are treated, d. You simply enjoy the feeling of treating others poorly.
- **Do Not** lie! A lack of integrity as we know quickly erodes trust and once trust is violated, it is very hard to recover from. "*Somebody once said that in looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if you don't have the first, the other two will kill you. You think about it; it's true. If you hire somebody without [integrity], you really want them to be dumb and lazy.*" - Warren Buffett

- **Do Not** act like you are better than those around you. Negative arrogance will get you nowhere and usually not a very welcomed characteristic of a leader.
- **Do Not** forget where you came from, and how you got to where you are now. I'm certain that somewhere along your career path, you enjoyed a great boss or leader. Learn and grow your own! *"If you are lucky enough to do well, it's your responsibility to send the elevator back down"*- Kevin Spacey
- **Do Not** take credit for the work others performed to try and position yourself with your boss.
- **Do Not** try and lead from the rear or use your go-to-guy or gal to make or execute hard decisions or actions that clearly you should be handling.
- **Do Not** disengage yourself from the lower echelons of the organization. Regardless of your management level, employees should be hearing from their leader. No one likes ambiguity, especially during change. Whether it's simply the state of the business from time to time, or praising them for the company's success due to their hard work, or during the holiday season and major life events like congratulations for marriages, perhaps birthdays and offering condolences during deaths. These in my opinion are HUGE missed opportunities if not communicated!
- **Do Not** just focus on your strong employees. Nor should you just focus on the weaknesses of others and then talk poorly about them to your boss, peers or direct reports. If you are doing this you're wrong!
- **Do Not** allow toxic employees to ruin an organizations culture. It takes backbone, communication skills and leadership courage to hold these folks accountable for their destructive behavior. Allowing this behavior to exist just sucks the life and spirit out of the whole team. Either they will reform their toxic behavior or be walked to the door holding brown boxes. Good leaders create positive work environments, not hostile, toxic or negative ones.
- **Do Not** take constructive criticism, or an employee attempting to manage up as a personal attack and then take it out on others. They are merely trying to help you.

"It's never too late to change. Tomorrow you can wake up with a renewed sense of purpose and create a positive impact in people's lives." - Robin C. Nagele

