



Do leaders recognize themselves in those whom they lead? Do they remember what it's like to be under someone's supervision and the influence that leader yields?

There are many well-written posts on the value of good leadership, but I wonder if leaders understand what it really means to listen, to invite honest feedback, and to celebrate the courage of those who take that risk.

Several years ago, while speaking to my then middle school-age son, I gave him my opinion regarding a particular situation and how he handled it. It was obvious he was tuning me out so I asked him what was he thinking and invited him to be honest. To my surprise he respectfully said I needed to stop lecturing him and to lighten up.

Thankfully, my reaction was not to react. Instead, I hit the pause button while internally celebrating his courage to be honest. I knew my response could elevate the conversation or shoot it down so I responded, "Fair enough, you've obviously got this, and from now on I'm your wingman."

It was a pivotal moment in my son's young life as well as my own, and as a result, he was empowered to act and react with me keeping my distance, but with a wingman by his side. Now that he's a young adult I have the honor and pleasure of watching him soar!

Does this pivotal lesson between leader and protégé transfer to the world of business? That's for the leader to decide.