

Cultivating People Skills in Your Leadership

(The Vital Role of Relationships in Leadership)

“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:15)

BIBLICAL
BASIS

Clearly, no one exemplified people skills better than Jesus, Himself. Everywhere He went people followed Him. Why? Because it was obvious that people were His passion. He met their needs wherever He encountered them. Jesus touched people physically, spiritually and emotionally.

The basis of leadership is people. An old Proverb states, “He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk.” If you can’t relate with people, they won’t follow you. Relationships will make or break a leader over time. Effective leaders don’t focus on themselves and their own success. They are others-minded. To them, success means developing people.

Four Truths about Leadership and People

1. People are a church’s most appreciable _____.
2. A leader’s most important asset is _____.
3. A good leader can lead various groups because leadership is about _____.
4. You can have people skills and not be a good _____, but you cannot be a good leader without people skills.

LUKE 10:30-37

Jesus told this story in response to a man who asked, “Who is my neighbor?” He spoke of a man who was robbed and beaten alongside a road and left for dead. Soon, a couple of religious leaders walked by, but never stopped. It is likely they were on their way to some religious activity. Then, a Samaritan came by and helped the man, caring for him until he was well again. Jesus then asked: Who was the neighbor in this story? He taught that relationships and ministry are not confined to your immediate circle of friends (Luke 10:36-37). He taught that relationships are more important than many spiritual activities we practice (Matthew 5:23-24). He also taught the truth below.

EXAMINE THE
WORD

The Way You See Yourself Is the Way You Serve Your People

The story of the “Good Samaritan” illustrates how we treat others based upon how we see ourselves. Notice the different ways the victimized man was treated in this story...

1. THE ROBBERS:

They used people.

They manipulated others.

They saw the man as a _____.

2. THE PRIESTS:

They were law keepers.

They were pure.

They saw the man as a _____.

3. THE SAMARITAN:

He was despised.

He knew how it felt to be ignored.

He saw the man as a _____.

As a leader, you will be tempted to do all three of these in your ministry: exploit, avoid, and love people. The goal is to look past their faults and see their needs.

Leadership Is Relationships

Years ago, several Christian leaders met together in a summit. Their goal was to summarize the Christian faith into a single sentence. They actually took the goal a step further. They summarized Christianity into a single word. The one word they chose...

Christianity is _____

What separates us from all the religions in the world is the centrality of relationships. Our faith is built around relationships, not creeds or disciplines. Consider this. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, He said we're to "love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength" (a vertical relationship), and "to love our neighbor as ourselves" (a horizontal relationship). Jesus did not say: By this will all men know that you are my disciples – that you have memorized fifty verses of Scripture. Instead, He said that the way the world would know we are His disciples is how we handle our relationships. How well do we love people?

CHECK YOUR
HEART

Question: Think of the people in your life who are the most difficult to love. Why are they difficult to love? How do you view them?

Question: How can you begin to see people the way the Samaritan saw the man?

"People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

-Dr. John C. Maxwell

A Definition for Spiritual Leadership**Four Word Pictures:**

1. THE ANALOGY OF THE _____

(Good hosts take initiative and make others feel comfortable.)

As a leader, you must "host" the relationships and conversations of your life. Leaders are not guests in relationships. Knowing what a good host does in his home, we ought to be able to do it with people everywhere.

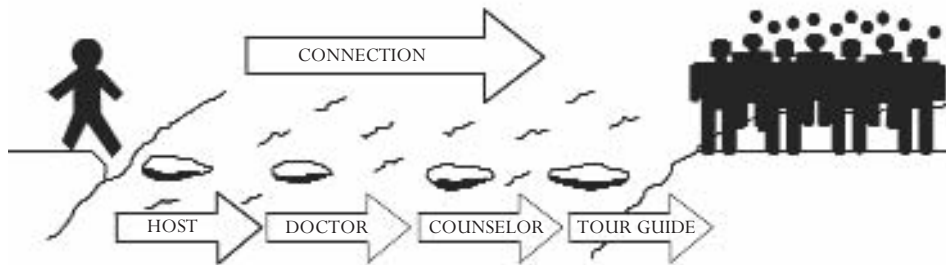
2. THE ANALOGY OF THE _____

(Good doctors ask questions. They probe until they see the need.)

As you attempt to discern people's needs, ask questions until you discern their condition. Only then do you try to address their needs. Don't give a prescription before a diagnosis.

3. THE ANALOGY OF THE _____
(Good counselors are active listeners and interpret what they hear.)
As a leader with solid people skills, you must become an active listener. You should non-verbally communicate that you understand the person and identify with him. We earn our right to speak by listening.
4. THE ANALOGY OF THE _____
(Guides don't merely fellowship with others; they get them to the destination.)
A leader's people skills must result in his ability to take people to a destination. Our purpose is not to be liked by people, but to take them on a journey and to reach a goal they might not have reached alone.

A leader should take the appropriate role according to the needs of the person they are leading. Our job is to "connect" with people, so that we can take them on the journey.



Many leaders make the mistake of separating leadership from relationships. This happens when a person steps into a position of leadership and assumes that everyone will follow them because of their position.

TRUTH IN A PICTURE

What Every Leader Should Know about People...

1. PEOPLE ARE _____. GIVE THEM CONFIDENCE.
***Key Principle:** Hurting people hurt people. Secure people offer security to people.
- Most people are insecure, in some area of their life.
 - Most insecure people are looking for security.
 - A secure environment is provided only by secure and confident people.

"Think of ways to encourage one another, do outbursts of love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)

2. PEOPLE LIKE TO FEEL _____. HONOR THEM.
***Key Principle:** To deal with yourself, use your head. To deal with others, use your heart.

When You Affirm and Honor Someone with Your Words...

- Make them *sincere*. Be genuine about what you say.
- Make them *specific*. Be pointed and specific about what you say.
- Make them *public*. Share the honoring word in front of others.
- Make them *personal*. Get beyond general gratitude; speak personally to them.

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." (Romans 12:10)

3. PEOPLE LOOK FOR A BETTER _____. GIVE THEM HOPE.
***Key Principle:** The key to today is a belief in tomorrow.

Everyone lives for something better to come. Where there is no hope in the future, there is no power in the present. Years ago a study was done to see what effective pastors had in common. They had one common characteristic. Each of them said that their main goal every Sunday was to offer hope to their people.

"Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the Lord never ends! Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each day." (Lamentations 3:21-23)

KEY POINTS

4. PEOPLE NEED TO BE _____ . LISTEN TO THEM.

***Key Principle:** To connect with others, understand the “keys” to their heart.

Knowing the key to someone’s heart:

- a. What do they *talk* about?
- b. What do they *cry* about?
- c. What do they *dream* about?
- d. What do they *laugh* about?
- e. What do they *plan* about?

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12:15)

5. PEOPLE LACK _____ . NAVIGATE FOR THEM.

***Key Principle:** Most people can steer the ship; a leader helps chart the course.

- a. Leaders must *know* the way.
- b. Leaders must *go* the way.
- c. Leaders must *show* the way.

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.” (1Peter 5:1-2)

6. PEOPLE ARE _____ . SPEAK TO THEIR NEEDS FIRST.

***Key Principle:** People must be ministered to before they can minister.

MOST PEOPLE THINK . . .

- Their situation is unique.
- Their problems are the biggest.
- Their faults should be overlooked.
- Their time is most precious.

LEADERS MUST . . .

- Put their people first.
- Know their people’s needs.
- See the total picture.
- Love people to help them grow.

“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

7. PEOPLE GET _____ . ENCOURAGE THEM.

***Key Principle:** What gets rewarded, gets done.

An Experiment...

Years ago, an experiment was conducted to measure people’s capacity to endure pain. How long could a bare-footed person stand in a bucket of ice water? It was discovered that when there was someone else present offering encouragement and support, the person standing in the ice water could tolerate the pain twice as long as when there was no one present.

“...put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another.” (Colossians 3:12-13)

8. PEOPLE WANT TO _____ . HELP THEM WIN.

***Key Principle:** Reach out and help others achieve their goals. Victory has a thousand fathers, defeat is an orphan.

Question: What do these words have in common?

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| * High morale | * Enthusiasm | * Momentum |
| * Optimism | * Energy | * Excitement |

Answer: Victory. Everyone wants to be on a team that experiences victories and reaches the goal they are pursuing. Leaders provide this for others.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a)

9. PEOPLE DESIRE _____ . PROVIDE COMMUNITY.

***Key Principle:** Practice the 101% Principle with people: Find the 1% you have in common with someone, and give it 100% of your attention.

God’s Word is all about community – from the Garden of Eden in the beginning, to the city of God in the end. We were never intended to take the Christian journey alone. The New Testament teaches us “we are members of one another.” The word “saint” (in the singular form) does not appear once, in the New Testament. The word “saints” (in the plural form) appears many times.

“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (I Corinthians 12:26)

10. PEOPLE SEEK _____ TO FOLLOW. BE AN EXAMPLE.

***Key Principle:** People do what people see.

A Life Example:

The early followers of St. Francis of Assisi wanted to know what to do when they went out into the streets to minister. “Preach the Gospel at all times,” St. Francis advised. “If necessary, use words.”

“And you should follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.” (I Corinthians 11:1)

ASSESSMENT: *What do you struggle with most in relationships? Now, list some people whom you believe God is challenging you to host and lead more effectively.*

ACTION PLAN

APPLICATION: *How can you begin to overcome these struggles, and connect with these people?*

You can be a people person!