
IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
The Leadership Series:
Check Your Ego



THE LEADERSHIP SERIES: CHECK YOUR EGO

1

Summary

Leadership can really be a head-trip for some, and head-trips lead to painful falls. Take note of this important article and reflect on the ways in which a Leader's ego can derail his ride to the top. This is a must read, especially for new Leaders or those who've seen some warning signs that their ego may need a check-up from the neck-up.

Ego, Humility & Empathy

- To be a great developer of people, you must be personally secure, because taking your people to the height of their potential may mean they will pass you by. It takes a very secure person to face that possibility, but without such a mind-set, you may be competing with your people instead of developing them.
- Leaders put empathy ahead of authority. Leaders are friendly, not arrogant or egotistical. They are as friendly with the janitors as they are with the Chairman of the Board.
- An apology is the sign of a secure Leader.
- In most instances, the people you work with will know as much or more about the specifics of the details as you will; it's foolish not to bow to their expertise.
- Leaders don't have fragile egos. They recognize that no single person can have all of the answers all of the time, and that they can always learn from others. Leaders don't let their ego get in the way.
- Good Leaders are teachable.
- Leaders look at others as equals, not as subordinates.
- Empathy can come from asking questions, really listening and trying to understand what someone else is feeling. Good Leaders do this.
- Leaders can take charge without always being in control.
- What you must value most is candor. "Tell me the bad news and I won't bite your head off. Tell me the bad news and I won't start looking for someone to blame." The biggest risk you run as the CEO of any company is that you'll never hear the truth again if the word gets out that you shot the messenger.
- You have to establish authority while concurrently encouraging input and consultation. People should say, "He really listened to me and asked good questions. I didn't persuade him this time, but I know he's flexible and really listens to all sides."
- Leaders must be willing to say, "I was wrong," "I made a mistake," "I accept responsibility for our failure and am willing to accept the full consequences of that failure."



THE LEADERSHIP SERIES: CHECK YOUR EGO

2

- You expect the CEO to be incredibly energetic and to bring a sense of vitality and life to a problem. They are very clear thinkers, so they make decisions and they instill in people a sense that failure is not something to be afraid of.
- It's very important to restore the confidence inside the company. Give people a goal, a target. Go to your people and say, "Look, here's my plan, I have every reason to believe that it will work, but you know I could be wrong, so look it over and give me some feedback."
- Say, "You can make a mistake, that's the way we all learn. All I ask is that you always come back to me the moment you've made a mistake so we can quickly sort it out. Just don't ever give me a big surprise, never cover up bad news. Never. You must come to me quickly, while there still may be time to do something."
- People should be frank with you. They should not be afraid of you. There has to be a bit of irreverence, so that not only is someone allowed to tell you that you're wrong, but that there's a culture where it's better to say we disagree than we agree. In the end they have to have the respect, that when you say, okay, I've heard all of you and I think we have to do this, and nobody will second guess you. That's leadership!