

The 10 Things
That ~~Leaders~~ *Great*
Leaders Do

Steve Holt

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I am thankful...

... for the many lousy bosses I have had the privilege to work for

... for the many great leaders I have worked for that showed me great examples



Leadership is hard

... let's not pretend that it is easy

... let's recognize that a bad boss
doesn't always have to stay a bad
boss

1. Not leading by example

- Being the owner / boss / leader has its privileges.
- Great leaders demonstrate the behavior they want from their followers
- Whether you want it or not, your actions are being watched and they learn from what they see



Examples....

- If you expect your staff to show up on time and stay till quitting time, then you need to show up early and stay past quitting time
- If you expect your staff to respond quickly to email, then you need to as well
- The milkman

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2. Poor communication

- Communication problems are magnified by lousy leadership
- Emails and voicemails
- Sending mixed signals to different groups increases confusion and anxiety
- Doing what you say you are going to do

Examples....

- A constant state of confusion
- Empty promises
- Nothing in writing
- Meeting one-on-one in private so that there is no record it was said

3. Delegating responsibility without authority

- When you give them a job to do, but no decision-making authority to enable them to get the job done, you are setting them up for failure
- Not providing authority to actually accomplish anything is a control issue more than anything else



Examples....

- Surprise visits
- Stalled projects because I had to wait on him to approve every single step
- No budget
- No budget control

4. Denying employees opportunities to grow

- If we never let our children fail, they will not know how to succeed
- Providing opportunities to ‘stretch’ themselves is how employees grow
- Using moments of failure to teach and learn and move forward

Examples....

- “I’m not being treated fairly”
- Heaping praise where praise isn’t warranted
- ‘banish’ or ‘black ball’ someone for failing, sending a signal to the rest of the organization

5. Never admitting wrong

- Lousy leaders don't accept blame for their bad decisions because their ego won't allow it
- Narcissists almost always do this
- If it wasn't their fault, a culprit must be found because someone is to blame

Examples....

- Changing the 'rules' when it doesn't go quite as planned
- "I never told you that..."
- "You misunderstood what I said..."

6. Feeling threatened by smart employees

- Smart bosses know that they don't know everything and need people around them who are smarter.
- Lousy leaders don't know that
- Fragile egos are usually the cause of it
- Unless you want to do everything yourself, get beyond this one

Examples....

- Scheduling meetings and missing them on purpose to demonstrate superiority
- Excluding key employee from meetings about their project/department

7. Not praising /rewarding

- Appreciation is a fundamental human need
- Withholding recognition in my opinion is a great de-motivator
- Lousy leaders who don't praise and reward others are telling their employees that they don't matter
- Recognition confirms their work is valued

Examples....

- Taking credit for other's ideas
- Rewarding the wrong people
- “The paycheck every 2 weeks is their recognition.”

8. Publicly correcting employees

- Everyone needs correction at some point.
- Correcting someone in front of their co-workers is humiliating and builds resentment
- It has more to do with the boss' need for attention and desire to exert power

Examples....

- “Can you come to my office please?”
- Leaving the door open when yelling
- Questioning with an arrogant tone in a group setting.
- Tell me how your company recognizes and praises a job well done...

9. Running down employees to their coworkers

- Narcissists are fond of doing this to make themselves look better by tearing down others
- Lousy leaders use their elevated position, and the hesitancy of subordinates to speak up and correct 'the boss', to arrogantly project an air of superiority



Examples....

- Fostering distrust between employees
- Forcing employees to report on each other
- “I just want you to watch your back around _____ because....”
- Making fun of employees in social situations

10. Leading with fear and intimidation

- This is perhaps the worst thing a leader can do.
- Lousy leaders demand loyalty
- Promoting 'open door policies' but then punishing differing opinions or speaking up
- It kills creativity
- It leads to favoritism and divides staff

Examples....

- Randomly moving office locations to more undesirable locations
- Providing perks and benefits to 'yes men'.
- Excluding people from meetings and events to 'send a message'
- Infighting and 'maneuvering'
- Public humiliation

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Examples....

- Making people so miserable that they quit so they won't be fired
- Emotional manipulation of highs and lows
- Anyone want to share examples?



The baby
elephant
principal



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