

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

LEADERSHIP BOOSTERS

How to Make an Immediate Positive
Impact on Those You Lead



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the capacity to influence others by unleashing the potential and power of people and organizations for the greater good.

—Ken Blanchard leadership author

Leading people is one of the most rewarding, yet challenging, of all roles in the workplace. The key is knowing how to leverage the right set of skills to lead individuals and teams through dynamic situations without feeling overwhelmed and underprepared. The good news is you can acquire leadership skill.

These skill boosters in this guide will be helpful if you:

1. have been serving in a leadership role and you have had some challenges or you have noticed some changes needed;
2. are about to become a leader/boss/manager/supervisor, and you are feeling a bit overwhelmed;
3. would like to improve how you teach/train/coach others to more effectively lead other people.

This skill booster guide is designed to help you improve or acquire specific leadership skills. These skill boosters are time tested, high impact, positive, and practical as they apply to typical workplace scenarios. Applying these ten skill boosters will improve your leadership abilities.

It is very important that you do not try to change too much all at once. You should identify the skill you feel passionate about working on which would add value to you and others. Assess yourself in that skill, ask others to assess you and then incorporate techniques that will help reinforce your behavior of consistently applying that leadership skills.

This skill building guide draws upon the work of some of the best leadership practitioners and the top leadership thinkers (e.g., Kouzes and Posner, Bridges, Bar-On, and Goleman). Well-known author, speaker, and researcher Ken Blanchard has a definition you need to consider using as you incorporate these skill boosters into your leadership practice. (On his website, www.KenBlanchard.com, he defines leadership as “the capacity to influence others by unleashing the potential and power of people and organizations for the greater good.”)

Some definitions of leadership focus *only* on goal accomplishment; some people may mistakenly believe that leadership is only about reaching goals, financial or otherwise. The key phrase in Blanchard’s definition is “the greater good”—what is best for all involved. Leadership should not be purely for personal gain or goal accomplishment. Leadership is a higher calling.

James Kouzes and Barry Posner in *The Leadership Challenge* emphasize that leadership is not a position, but a role or set of skills that a person brings to influencing others. This skill booster guide will help you see yourself as a leader, regardless of your role or title, and as someone who can and should influence others, hopefully for the greater good.

Leading others can be extremely rewarding *if* you know what you are doing; do it right, at the right time, and with the right people; and understand how to change how you do it. Leading others can be hard work as evidenced by how few do it well. But if you learn how to do it well, it can be very satisfying. It can provide you with a sense of accomplishment,

achievement, and purpose. Experiencing the emotional highs of knowing you helped others improve, grow, learn, and gain confidence and competence is rewarding.

Researcher and author Andrew DuBrin (2012) said it well: “Leadership is a function of (1) leadership skills, (2) the individuals/groups being led, and (3) the situation the leader and those being led are in.”

You show confident and competent leadership if you have the requisite skills to lead. This skill booster guide is designed to boost your leadership competencies if you know your people, and you are aware of the situation. This skill booster guide also will help develop your situational awareness.

Included in each chapter, which contains one leadership skill booster, are (1) a background on the importance of each Leadership Skill Booster topic; (2) a quick self-assessment to gauge how good you think/feel you are at this skill, and others’ assessments to give you feedback; (3) a short case study to demonstrate the booster topic’s importance by putting you in a real-life where you need to decide what to do; (4) sample scenarios that illustrate two different ways to handle a topic, and 5) specific leadership how-to tips and ideas you can begin acting on now!

Leadership Boosters does not have to be read in order. The best way to use this skill booster guide is to choose the skill that you want/need help with first. Then, read and think about what speaks to you, and make a note of one skill you will commit to working on in the next six months. New or different leadership behaviors take time to become natural habits.

The title of this book suggests your leadership lifting off. Think of a rocket lifting off. The booster rockets propel the entire machine into orbit, where the working parts (people and supplies) can do their jobs and make progress. The skill boosters included in this book provide a quick, powerful burst to get your leadership skills going where they need to go. These ten leadership skill boosters give you a clearer focus on what to do and how to do it.

The ten skill boosters highlighted in this book are: self-awareness, trust, change, people skills, networking, coaching, technology, communication, generations, and servant leadership.

These skills can immediately be put into practice. They can begin to work for you now to make a positive, meaningful, and widespread impact on you, your workplace, and those you lead. Skills will not become habit until you practice them for a while. This guide shows you how to make this positive leadership skill a habit so you become a more confident and competent leader.

What this leadership booster guide is *not* is a book that explains every type of leader, situation, or skill set needed. The focus is to provide some useful guidance on many of the practical, immediately impactful areas most leaders need to understand, apply, and improve upon.

Do not try to make too many changes to how you
lead based on what you read here!

From my work with many leaders over many years, and intense study and teaching of the most relevant research-based practices, I have learned that if you try to change too much, you end up overwhelmed and confused. You change nothing or change everything, making things worse by proverbially turning over the apple cart.

Think of golfers who change twenty-five things about their swing all at once. It is overwhelming; they hit the ball worse, get frustrated, and decide all the changes were hindrances so they stop doing any of them. The best golf instructors focus on one skill to improve and then suggest the golfer work on just that one skill. After that becomes habit, the instructor tackles a new skill to improve.

Find one skill to work on, and commit to working on it over time (it can take at least six months to make them habits). Once you feel comfortable with each new skill, select another skill to focus upon. Again, allow a few more months for practice.

So on your mark, get set,
read, think, and apply!





CHAPTER 1

Leadership Skill Booster #1: Know Yourself

Everybody thinks of changing humanity, but nobody thinks of changing himself.
—Leo Tolstoy, Russian author

The Center for Creative Leadership is one of the leading leadership research organizations in the world. In working with thousands of leaders over many years, the Center's researchers found that one key item separates highly successful leaders from the others. That key item is ...

self-awareness.

The key to success is not simply becoming *aware* of your leadership strengths and weaknesses, but after being aware, doing *something with the results* to improve yourself, others, and/or the situation. (This probably is not rocket science, despite the booster-rocket metaphor.)

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We have all seen too many leaders, managers, and supervisors who have blind spots when they only focus on what *they* think. As a leader, you need to ask others for honest feedback to uncover what they think of you. You can do this in an open forum if the trust is there (more on trust building later) or, if you wish, provide the assessments and have them returned to you anonymously.

The key is to ask for feedback and use the results to improve.

Those who are asked for feedback need to know you well enough to provide honest, detailed, and helpful observations. If they do not know you well, they will be guessing or basing their feedback on limited knowledge. This is not helpful; it may even be hurtful to your improvement efforts because the feedback may not reflect actual experience.

Finally, do the following with the feedback:

Thank those who filled out the assessments, and share results with them.

Tell them what you learned about yourself.

Tell them what you plan to do to improve your leadership skills.

Give them permission to tell you when you are doing it poorly, and promise you will not hold that against them. (You must have built trust, or this is a wasted effort.)

Commit and do it. Keep working on it over time; you will not be an expert right out of the gates.

If you struggle with it, find someone who is good at what you wish to do, and ask that person to coach or mentor you (more on coaching and mentoring in a later section).

Reassess yourself (and others) in six months to see if you are improving in the area you have been focusing on. These areas may be empathy, stress tolerance, flexibility, leading change, coaching others ... and many more included in this guide.

Leadership Booster #1: Know Yourself

Case Study 1



Don was vice president of human resources for a large hospital in a mid-sized southwestern US city. He had held this position for more than four years. Prior to that, he had served in two other large organizations, a manufacturing plant and a government agency. He was used to getting results wherever he worked. He had never worked in a health-care setting, but he figured that “HR work is HR work” and attacked problems with the same fervor and tenacity he had everywhere else.

Don was called into the CEO’s office one Friday afternoon. He thought nothing of it until Sarah, the CEO, looked up from her laptop and said, “Don, what the heck is going on in your area?” Don’s jaw dropped.

“What do you mean, Sarah?”

“Your Good Manager Survey numbers are off the chart—off the chart *low*.”

Don had no idea. He looked over the numbers, and Sarah was right. Over forty-five people across the organization had filled out this new survey (an attempt to improve operations), and it was mandated that the survey be filled out for each person with direct reports.

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Everyone in a management role had to do a self-assessment, and those who knew the manager had the opportunity to provide feedback.

Don was rated extremely low in the categories of “Problem Solving,” “Being Too Assertive,” “Not Communicating with Others,” and “Stress Tolerance.” Interestingly, Don rated himself extremely highly on each of those items.

Sarah said, “Don, you have a lot of strengths, but you also have some areas that need attention. I’ve decided to hire an executive coach to offer suggestions on ways you can improve those areas that may be helpful to you. You obviously have a blind spot—or actually, four major ones—and I think an expert coach could be extremely beneficial in these areas, which would make you an even stronger leader. You will work with Cassie, from the Pacer Group out of Chicago. She’s the best. See what you guys can do to work on your weak areas.”

Don said the only thing he could: “Okay. Thanks, Sarah.” He walked out of her office in shock.

Over the next six months, Don and Cassie developed a plan to improve, and Don implemented the plan. When he began to hear feedback, he was initially hurt, angry, and defensive, and he made excuses. Soon, however, Don realized that this company-funded coaching idea was an opportunity to realize his full potential. He did just that. He focused on improving his communication and coaching skills. On the resurvey conducted for Don six months later, his numbers and qualitative comments were much more positive.

Don saved his job, but more importantly, he felt more confident and competent as a leader in this health-care setting. His people were responding much more positively to his work and his collegial nature.

These are the four steps to Don’s success:

1. Self-awareness
2. A specific action plan—doing something, stopping doing something, and/or doing something differently

3. Executing the plan
4. Getting more feedback on progress

It is amazing how this works when done right. Is this the end? This story never ends ...

Although Don improved in these four areas, he had other areas to work on, and he knew this was an ongoing journey. He needed to identify skills to sharpen, work on, and improve and ask for feedback to avoid more blind spots in the future.



Case Study 2

Dave needed help. He knew he did. His people were not responding well, absenteeism was up, productivity was down, and morale was dipping. So he was allowed to bring in an external coach to work with him.

The coach, Ron, came with impeccable recommendations from some of Dave's friends and colleagues who had used external coaches. He also called a few folks who knew Ron's work. They said he was personable, thorough, detailed, flexible, insightful, and skilled at getting to the root cause or causes, identifying key issues to work on, and developing a workable action plan to improve. So Ron was hired to work with Dave for six months.

Dave asked Ron, "Why does it take so long?"

Ron explained, "It usually takes that long for new habits to bear fruit, and I need to be with you along the way to help you harvest that fruit from the leadership tree."

Ron administered some 360-degree assessments (i.e., surveys of others around him—managers, peers, direct reports, customers) of Dave's leadership. His direct reports, colleagues, bosses, vendors, customers, and support staff all filled out a detailed survey on Dave.

Ron and Dave sat down for several hours and went over the results in great detail to ensure that Dave understood. Then Dave, Scott, and Dave's boss, Francine, worked together to craft a detailed action plan with a few key behaviors to work on. Based on the survey results, Dave needed to work on flexibility and optimism from the emotional and social intelligence sections of his Leadership Booster survey. Dave also shared what he discovered and what he planned to do about it with all those who completed the assessments. He asked that they give him feedback on his progress, anonymously or directly, anytime over the next six months.

With Ron's oversight from a distance, Dave worked the plan, tweaked it, committed to it, and actualized it by the end of the six months. Dave and Ron then administered the same 360-degree assessment instrument, and the results were amazing. Absenteeism was nearly zero, productivity was the highest in the company, and morale was at an all-time high.

Moral: Care enough to know when you need help, find help, assess, plan, act, check progress, tweak the plan, commit over time, reassess, and compare before and after. Then do it all over again, focusing on other areas that need work.

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Case Study #3

Seth, a director of operations, hired a consultant (Tom) to assess, coach, and train him on being a better manager. Seth had worked at his company as a manager for eight years but felt he had hit a plateau in his career. He was doing okay but could not seem to get the attention of his bosses to keep moving up.

Tom immediately told Seth several things he needed to work on “based on what others find helpful.” Tom did not talk to Seth or any of his coworkers, and he did not ask questions of Seth’s bosses. Tom had “done this for many years” and felt he knew exactly what needed to be done because he had seen similar types of managers. Tom did no assessments or interviews, talked to Seth for only about fifteen to twenty minutes, and then provided a prepackaged booklet of ideas to help Seth. Tom gave Seth’s boss a considerable bill for his services and left on the next flight out.

Seth shared the booklet with his boss. They looked at each other and tossed it in the trash can. Those ideas did not fit the work they did, the people Seth led, nor Seth’s skill set. It would likely have had disastrous results.

Moral: If you hire a consultant, ensure that they know what they are doing. Ask around, get referrals to call, ensure you know what you want from a consultant/coach before considering using one. Make sure that they individually tailor their services. Be clear what the expectations are from the coach, the person being coached, and the person hiring the coach.

Leadership Booster Overall Self-Assessment

This assessment focuses on ten skill areas that leaders need to be competent and confident in to be successful. Each statement is broken down further within the Leadership Booster guide.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Know Yourself Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I believe that people who work for and with me think I have high integrity.					
2. I am effective at leading change efforts at work.					
3. I have the right people skills (interpersonal competencies) to do a great job at work.					
4. My professional networking skills are strong.					
5. I have effective coaching skills.					
6. I am good at leveraging technology to be a more effective leader.					
7. My communication skills (oral, written, and listening) are strong.					
8. I am good at valuing the diverse generational differences in the workplace.					
9. I honestly care about the people who work for and with me.					

Leadership Booster Overall Assessment by Others

Leader name: _____

Check the response that you feel best describes this leader and how he/she typically behaves.

Rating scale

Self-Awareness Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader has high integrity.					
2. My leader is effective at leading change effort at work.					
3. My leader has the right people skills (the interpersonal competencies) to do a great job at work.					
4. My leader has strong professional networking skills.					
5. My leader has effective coaching skills.					
6. My leader is good at leveraging technology to be a more effective leader.					
7. My leader's communications skills (oral, written, and listening) are strong.					
8. My leader is very good at valuing the diverse generational differences in the workplace.					
9. My leader honestly cares about the people who work for and with him or her.					

Based on the assessments, what do you believe are this leader's top two self-awareness booster strength areas?

1.
2.

Based on the assessments, what are the top two self-awareness booster areas needing improvement?

1.
2.

- A. **What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he or she does it?**
B. **Why that one?**

A.
B.

Other comments for this leader to consider (please type or print):



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Ask others! Send out short surveys with space for people to write or type in suggestions, and ask for feedback on areas you wish to improve. These can be anonymous, depending on the level of trust in your workplace. Ask folks who know you well; otherwise, they are guessing and it skews the data. You want honesty and accuracy.
2. “Positive boosters needed” cards. Give out cards each week at staff meetings (a different color than in item one above) to ask, “What am I doing well, or not so well, as a leader?” Collect, read, and share what you hear from the others. Commit to continuing to try to be strong in those things you are doing well and gauge what to do about things you are not doing so well.
3. Keep a daily journal. Reflect on what you feel went well each day and what did not go so well, based on feedback from others and your own self-reflections and observations. If you had today to do over, what would you do differently, if anything? Why? What different outcome would you expect if you had a redo?
4. Find an accountability partner (AP). Choose someone whose opinion and insight you value, someone who is good at what you wish to be better at, and ask if they will be willing to:
 - a. Help you improve by offering advice and assisting with a plan to improve.
 - b. Check on you weekly to see how you are doing with the plan.
 - c. Work with you to tweak your plan if it is not working as well as you would like.
 - d. Work with you until you and they feel you have improved. Then they should cut you loose; this is not a forever arrangement, nor should it be.

5. **Set goals.** Set one or two short-term (less than a year) goals for yourself and one or two long-term (three to five years) goals. Then map out a plan/strategy, down to the specific steps, to reach your goals. What resources do you need to accomplish these goals? Who can help you? Find an accountability partner for each goal to check on your weekly progress. Ensure that the goals follow the SMART principle for goal setting: specific, measureable, action oriented, realistic, and time bound.
6. **Thank yous.** Thank whoever helps you reach your goals or improve the areas you wish to improve (e.g., those who filled out the survey, your coach, accountability partner, boss, colleagues, friends, and family). When thanking them, be specific on what they did that you appreciated.
7. **Mirror, mirror.** Look in a mirror at your facial expressions. Try to express various emotions (e.g., anger, fear, joy, surprise, stress, satisfaction) and see what your face looks like. Ask others to try to guess what emotion you are displaying (pick one to act out with facial expression only, no words or hand gestures). See how you do.
8. **Behave according to your beliefs.** Make a list of your three or four guiding core values, such as “service before self” or “excellence in all we do.” What drives you toward success? Then make a list of what you do, or can do, to model those core values. Start focusing on modeling them, or be more committed to modeling them well.
9. **Hire a coach.** Ask others how to find a coach, search the web, or get a referral from someone you trust. It should be someone who is talented, experienced, has the time and energy to help you, and cares about your success. It should be someone who is a good teacher.
10. **Read, learn, and try.** Find e-books, webinars, books, articles, Facebook groups, blogs, etc. that focus on what behavior (booster) you wish to improve. Read them. Find a few takeaways that will help you and those you lead. Try them for a while, and then see item one in this list.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #1

Know Yourself

What one or two specific behavior(s) will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on the specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 2

Leadership Skill Booster #2: Integrity and Trust Building

*If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you do not have integrity,
nothing else matters.*

—Alan Simpson former US senator

Look on the US currency where it says “In God We Trust.” Trust topics are in the news each day, usually about leaders who have lost the trust of their people by doing something unethical. Some call lack of trust a “fatal flaw” because, without it, all the leadership skills in the world will not overcome that flaw. It *must* be fixed or nothing else matters. Nothing. Kouzes and Posner, in their popular research-based book *The Leadership Challenge*, found through hundreds of thousands of interviews and surveys that honesty is the number one trait of an effective leader.

What is trust?

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There are three behavioral elements that individuals should demonstrate and focus on to build trust: integrity, consistency, and transparency. These combine to help a leader build trust.

Integrity

What is integrity, and how do you get it?

It is speaking and acting (as in the often-used phrase “walking the walk, and talking the talk”) with reliable honesty. Keeping promises made. Honoring commitments. If promises and commitments are not going to be kept, for whatever reason, that fact needs to be clearly communicated to those who had commitments made to them. If a commitment is not kept, the *why* needs to be shared, and you must do whatever it takes to make amends. It is telling the truth when the truth may hurt. It is asking for feedback, appreciating it, and acting on that feedback in positive ways. It is being accountable.

The starting line to achieve high integrity is knowing your core values. What are core values? These are the key, fundamental, driving principles that guide you to do what is right. Once you know these, you need to identify the ways you live those values each day. They drive your actions, words, and behaviors. You need to behave what you believe.

Integrity is standing up for your beliefs even if, and especially if, they are unpopular. Do what is right. Know who you are. Be consistent. Be genuine. Be steadfast. Do what you say you will do. Focus on others rather than yourself. Be dependable. Words and actions need to be aligned. Own your mistakes. In conflict, have courage. Grow trust over time; hold it precious.

The question at the root of integrity is this:

How do I know the core values that guide me through life?

The facile answer is “you just know.” Really, it is more complicated, and each leader needs to work through it. Values are shaped by many variables, such as religious beliefs, parents, coaches/mentors, bosses, family, friends, educators, politics, and life experiences.

Consistency

Effective leaders understand that consistency of their leadership behaviors and words is an important part of how trustworthy they are perceived by those they lead. The most effective leaders know that to be perceived as a strong leader, they must maintain a strong set of values, live by a certain code of conduct and ethics, effectively communicate these to different constituencies, and then lead by example.

One cannot appear to be one thing to one group of people and something else to a different group of people. There needs to be one “you” if you are to be viewed as a stalwart leader.

“The final requirement of a leader is to earn trust,” management expert/author Peter Drucker once said. “Trust is the conviction that the leader means what they say ... a leader’s actions and a leader’s professed beliefs must be congruent, or at least compatible. Effective leadership—and again this is very old wisdom—is not based on being clever; it is based primarily on being consistent.”

So to build trust, one must maintain the highest integrity at all times. Remember, as leaders at any level, others are *always* watching you! They watch to ensure that your words and actions align. The saying, “walking the walk, and talking the talk” is appropriate here. Be as transparent as possible, and be consistent in your leadership actions and words. If you are missing one leg of this three-legged trust stool of integrity, consistency and transparency, it cannot stand and hold you up as a leader.

It should be noted that, to earn trust, you have to respect others and trust *them*. If you trust them (and they must earn it the same way you do), they are more likely to trust you, their leader.

Transparency

Aside from showing and acting with integrity and consistency, transparency is vital for leaders to build trust. Transparency is making sure people know what you are doing and saying, and *why*—being clear.

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Of course, there are going to be times when leaders cannot share everything. Perhaps they have been told to keep some information close until details can be confirmed. Leaders may have to say things like “I have some partial information, but I have been asked by my administrator to hold it until it can be confirmed. I will respect their wishes.”

So transparency is not always sharing everything, but it is being clear with what can be shared and keeping people informed as best you can. Transparency helps keep rumors from running rampant while those being led will try to guess what the leader is up to. In the absence of clarity, those being led will likely make things up to fill in the gaps in information.

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Leadership Booster #2: Integrity and Trust Building

Case Study 1



Sandy was a department supervisor at a large California packaging and shipping center. She had been the supervisor for about three months, taking over for her former boss who had been in that role for nearly ten years.

The former boss, now retired, had done the management job the same way, year after year, regardless of who worked there, what the priorities were, or who made suggestions. The former boss was a “my way or the highway” kind of leader, a one-size-fits-all approach to leading. Employees did not respect him.

Sandy had to win back the employees’ trust and respect for leadership. She also had to find a way to connect with her employees. She struggled to do this in her first three months but knew something needed to change to help morale, productivity, and the overall climate and culture.

Sandy was very much a participative manager. She asked for input on big decisions, gathered as much data as she could, and asked others for ideas before she made most decisions. The staff she led was not used to this and, perhaps understandably, a little skeptical of her hidden agenda when she asked probing questions like “What do you think?” and “Does anyone have other ideas?”

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She met with her employees individually to find out what motivated them, what they sought in a job, what excited them about their, where they saw themselves in five years, and what she could do to help them reach their dreams and potential. This built trust and a shared vision. The outcomes were increased comfort with Sandy, a personalization of the workplace, and increased levels of trust.

Over the next six months, her staff realized Sandy had the best interests of each person in the department in mind. With every action she took, every presentation she made, and every move she made, she put others first. They grew to appreciate that, and her. She committed to four values and asked others to think of living these four values:

1. Integrity first.
2. Service before self.
3. Excellence in all we do.
4. Having a little fun along the journey.

Absenteeism fell to nearly zero, and productivity went through the roof. Sandy's Good Manager survey results were the highest in the entire center, and other associates throughout the center put in by-name requests to work *for* Sandy.

Why?

Sandy cared.

She cared about others' needs over her own. She wanted to inform people about everything she was aware of that was going on or planning to happen, especially if it was going to impact their lives. She was honest. She did what she committed to do. This occasionally meant she stayed later than she would have liked (though she was a strong supporter and practitioner of work/life balance), but she did the extra things to ensure most people's wishes were factored into her work (one can never please everyone all the time). Sandy mentored other potential supervisors. She treated everyone fairly and equitably. Sandy had the trust of her people, and she valued that so much, she would try never to do anything to lose it.

Is this the end? This story never ends ...

Sandy kept doing those things that good bosses do, and her hard work, attention on excellence, and caring spirit did not go unnoticed. She was eventually promoted to director of the center and later VP of regional operations. In every case, there was an able replacement ready to step in because Sandy had coached others to be successful and to be ready to lead when she left.



Case Study 2

Julie was part of a sales team for several years and had done an excellent job. She was the top salesperson for many of the months she had worked for Ajax Company, and she had won numerous accolades and awards at the corporate level.

Her boss quit on a Friday, and she was selected by 5:00 p.m. Friday to replace her boss come Monday morning at 8:00 a.m.

She had never been a manager, so she asked her dad, a corporate executive with decades of management experience, for advice the weekend before she started her new job. Not only was she going to be a manager but she also was going to manage twenty former coworkers, some of whom were close friends. She was transitioning from peer to boss—a difficult challenge made more difficult in that she had never really managed.

Her dad told her the best thing she could do was to meet with each member of her team in the first few weeks, one-on-one. The goal of this meeting would be to find out what excited them about their job, and what she could do to support them in their job and their pursuit of their career goals.

Her dad also told her to be honest with her team. “Tell them good news and bad news,” he said. “They are adults. If you do not tell them and they do not know, they’ll make

things up to fill in the gaps. So, be clear, be honest, be open, and be consistent. Be fair, be ethical, and be yourself.”

Monday came, then Tuesday, then more Mondays, and then months. She was not the perfect boss, but she asked for feedback, and she met with her people one-on-one periodically to see how things were going and to show she cared.

They trusted her because she obviously put their needs before hers. They showed their loyalty and affection by working hard to ensure that she was successful. Before long, she was promoted to vice president and she did well in that role.

Moral: Be honest in all you do. If you do not know, say so, and try to find out. Listen. Do what you say you will do, and if you do not, say why not. Do not be afraid of liberally using the words “thank you,” “you are right,” “I am sorry,” and “I appreciate you.”



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Geoff was a manager of his division of a national company that made fencing, but things were not going well for him. His boss had called him into his office on numerous occasions saying the complaints from his team members were constant.

The word from his teammates (who all shared information anonymously out of fear of retribution) was that Geoff told them partial truths or misrepresented things said, shared gossip, started gossip, and so on. Geoff denied it or deflected it back on his team. But the bottom line was Geoff was not a very honest person. He got to where he was by telling half-truths, stretching the truth when it served his personal or professional needs. He would lie to clients to get them to sign up for more products and services than they needed to boost his division's sales numbers. He also had a habit of taking credit for the good results and passing blame for the failures.

Geoff's boss confronted him with some of this information, which Geoff denied. Then three clients and two teammates came out and exposed the facts. Geoff could no longer deny any of this. He was irate that he was caught.

He was also fired.

Leadership Booster Integrity and Trust Building Self-Assessment

Please fill this out as it pertains to your trustworthiness and how you typically behave with other people.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Trust Building Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. When I make commitments, I keep them.					
2. I ask for feedback from those I lead <i>and</i> act on it in positive ways.					
3. I show those I lead what my core values are.					
4. I focus on others' needs more than I focus on my own needs.					
5. Those I lead know why I do/say the things I do/say.					
6. I do a great deal to keep those I lead informed about what is going on at work.					
7. My words and actions are clearly aligned.					
8. My communication is always clear to those I lead.					
9. People can depend on me to do what I say I will do.					
10. People I lead feel I am trustworthy.					

Leadership Booster Integrity and Trust Building Assessment by Others

Please fill this out as it pertains to the trustworthiness of your leader and how this leader typically behaves with other people.

Leader name: _____

Check the response that you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Trust Building Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. When my leader makes commitments, my leader keeps them.					
2. My leader asks for feedback from those being led 3. and acts on it in positive ways.					
4. My leader shows those led their core values.					
5. My leader focuses on others' needs more than my leader focuses on their needs.					
6. Those led know why my leader does and says the things they do and say.					
7. My leader does a great deal to keep those led informed on what is going on at work.					
8. My leader's words and actions are clearly aligned.					
9. My leader's communication is always clear to those led.					
10. People can depend on my leader to do what they says they will do.					
11. People feel my leader is trustworthy.					

Based on the assessments, what do you believe are this leader's top two trust-building strengths?

1.
2.

Based on the assessments, what are the top two areas related to trust that this leader needs to improve?

1.
2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it related to building trust?
- B. Why that one?

A.
B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to trust building (please type or print):



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Treat everyone the same. Treat each one as if they are the most important person.
2. Put the needs of others ahead of the needs of self. Robert Greenleaf, noted leadership author, would call this servant leadership. Booster #10 addresses this skill. Put and keep the spotlight and focus on *them*, not on *you*. However, do be mindful of practicing and modeling work/life balance so as to remain healthy and have a healthy team.
3. Ask for feedback from others and keep asking. When you get it, good or bad, share it with others and tell them what you plan to do with the feedback. Attempt to address their suggestions.
4. Ask yourself, and answer honestly, who are you trying to *please the most* as a leader? Is it you? Is it your boss? Is it those you serve/lead? Do you even know? If you do not know, ask yourself why you do not. If you do know, is it what inspires others to trust in you? How do you know?
5. Tell the truth even if it is not what people wish to hear. This does not mean ignoring niceties and politeness. We are talking about important, trust-building situations like sharing the downsizing plan as soon as you are able and answering tough questions. This means you need to find out the answers to potential questions before you are asked. How? You *ask* for the answers from your leaders!
6. Right the wrongs. Make things right when you are wrong. Apologize quickly. Make restitution where possible. Do not cover things up. Do not let pride get in the way of doing the right thing. People respect and trust a leader who says, "I was wrong, and I apologize."
7. Show loyalty. Give credit freely and appropriately to the right people for the right things in a timely fashion. Acknowledge the contributions of others. Speak about people as if they were present. Represent those absent as though they were there.

Do not bad-mouth others. Do not disclose confidential information. Avoid gossip. Do not give positive accolades to people who do not deserve them.

8. Listen first; speak second. As Stephen Covey, author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (2013), preaches, seek first to understand. Diagnose what is going on. Listen with your ears, eyes, heart, and mind. Do not assume what matters most—ask, then listen. Never presume you know it all. More respect comes from saying, “I do not know, but I will try to find out” than from making things up.
9. Keep commitments. Say what you are going to do, and then do what you say you will. Do not overcommit. When you commit to something, make notes of what and by when and to whom, and then fulfill your commitments. If you break a commitment, say why and apologize for not keeping it. Make this a priority in your leadership!
10. Practice accountability. Hold yourself accountable. Hold others accountable. Take responsibility for results. Be clear about how you will communicate *how* you are doing and *how* others are doing. Do not shirk responsibility. Do not seek to blame, but seek to find out “What can we learn from this so next time we have more successful results?”

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #2 Integrity and Trust Building

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 3

Leadership Skills Booster #3: Inevitable Change

*We cannot wait for the storm to blow over.
We have got to learn to work in the rain.*

—Pete Silas former chairman, Phillips Petroleum

It is true that we cannot wait for change (the storm) to stop happening (blow over) to make decisions and move forward. We cannot because that time will never come, ever. So those who “get this” will be far ahead of the majority of other leaders. That is, they are the ones who embrace change by learning how to handle, manage, and lead themselves and others through the swirling white waters of change and the rocky rapids of making decisions in that white water.

Scary thought, right? But we have all heard the comments and questions:

- Why can't things just stay the same?

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- Why do we have to change?
- What is wrong with the way we do it now?
- “They” do not know anything. I am not changing.

In this skill booster, you will understand why there are so many changes all around us at work, how we can understand the reactions to change, and most importantly, what you as a leader can do to help yourself and others manage the transitions from where we are to where we are expected to go. If you do not know how to get there, any road you take will probably get you lost.

So let us get our maps out and figure out how to manage the swirling white water of change. If you know what and how to do this, you will be miles ahead of most leaders.

Grab a paddle.



Here are some facts for you to contemplate:

- Of the one hundred largest companies in the United States in 1900, only twelve existed in the year 2000.
- Of the one hundred largest in 1950, only twenty-four made it to 2000.
- During a recent twenty-year span, nearly half of the Fortune 500 companies dropped off that elite list.

- Just in the past decade, eighty thousand firms were acquired or merged, more than seventy thousand companies filed for bankruptcy, and nearly a million US firms downsized (Feldman, James. www.shifthappens.com).

What changes in the world of work have you seen in your working lifetime?

Think about this question for a few minutes. Jot down some responses in this book to be able to stare at them and see the reality. List some now:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Are you starting to get the picture? Change happens.

If we do not know how to manage ourselves and our situations, how can we coach others through this? Answer: We cannot. So we need to learn what is going on in the anatomy of a change and how you can help so it is not quite as scary.

Noted change expert William Bridges shares the three main pieces to change: (1) the change, (2) movement from *now* to *new*, and (3) baggage.

The Change

This is the decision or situation. Examples are moving a company's headquarters, merging with a competitor, changing to a paperless environment, or using a new software platform. The change is not what "does people in" and causes so much stress. It is this:

The Movement from Now to New

This is psychological and emotional people part of making a change. Many leaders do not get this part. They think that when they announce a change, the people will figure it

out. This is not likely to happen. Simply putting a raft in the water will not make change happen. The people in the raft have to know what, when, and how to get that raft downstream successfully.

The Baggage

These are the experiences we all have had with change in our lives. Some were good experiences, some were quite painful, and some were everything in between. These experiences flavor how engaging and/or resistant to changes we are.

Successful leaders are like raft guides. They realize that the river will toss changes at them. They have experience guiding many people through change, and effective leaders know each person deals with change differently based on skill level, knowledge of what is happening, and previous change experiences. Good leaders, like good guides, know each person is unique and they have to channel that uniqueness into a successful raft trip. The team or organization leader's job is to corral the collective experiences, skills, and knowledge of the members to help the team/organization reach the desired goal of seeing the change stick.

Change expert, researcher, consultant, and author William Bridges, whose books include *Managing Transitions* (2009), identified three phases of a change transition: (1) endings or letting go, (2) neutral zone or limbo, and (3) new beginnings. People behave differently in each phase, and if leaders understand *where* their people are based on what they say and do, they are better able to focus on what to *do* and *say* to help them keep moving toward successful change.

There are ten must-know tidbits to consider before we attempt to make a change stick:

1. Without some change, there is little or no progress.
2. Good leaders are skilled at reframing the negative thinking of those they lead.
3. Communicating is not simply telling employees what the change is.
4. Anticipate how much pushback you will get and from whom, and plan how to avoid/minimize their concerns.

5. People hate losing control over things in their lives, so figure out how you will factor that into what you say and do for them. Try to give them some influence and control in their lives.
6. Without answers, people fill in the gaps with whatever information they can, and rumors begin. This ambiguity can cause fear and stress.
7. Strong resistance may come from what we asked for, but that may not be what we really expected.
8. Unexpected surprises are what do us in.
9. We absorb change based on how that change affects us and those we care about.
10. As Bridges says, “It isn’t the change that does you in, it is the transition.”

Letting Go



Let go of the old ways and the old identities. Just as Columbus did, we have to leave things behind to sail toward the New World (change).

We have to think about certain things when dealing with people who have to be aboard if we are to be successful. Columbus could not sail to the New World alone; he had to sail with a team. Many of his crew struggled to let go of the Old World ways and wished to turn back.

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Any good leader has to identify Who is losing What with the change. This necessitates knowing each individual by asking what he or she fears most. A leader has to accept the reality and importance of what they are hearing. It may not seem like a big deal to the leader, or even have any remote connection to reality, but to the team members it may be a huge deal. It is their reality.

Good leaders are not surprised at what seems like an overreaction by team members. The team members likely are stressed. It is not an overreaction in their minds; it is only a reaction to what they perceive as real. Those going through change often go through signs of loss and grief, such as anger, denial, and sadness. So it helps to acknowledge losses openly and with empathy for their stressors.

The keys to helping folks let go of old ways and gravitate to the new changes are to listen, share information often, be empathetic, give them time, encourage talking, and keep reminding them *why* the change was needed—and if you cannot answer that, it is your duty to find out. Once a leader has accomplished the tough job of getting his or her team to let go, team members and leaders then go through the following stage.

Limbo



In this phase, the old way of doing something is over, but the new way is not fully operational or functioning.

As people try to make change work, they will have varying degrees of success, with rising and falling anxiety and motivations. You must realize this takes time. How much time depends on scope and magnitude, people's understanding and resiliency, and leadership's understanding of how to help people.

To keep momentum moving forward, strengthen connections within and between groups so people feel connected, have open dialogues, learn, and grow together. Use this time of strengthening connections to find creative solutions to keep moving forward. And you must *listen*.

Leaders can also make a difference by rewarding successes, which may be small at first, to let others know "it is working." This is imperative. Encourage experimentation in doing the new better. Training also can be vital at this point. Training on change and transitions, so people understand what they are feeling and how to manage those feelings, can add great value.

Meet periodically with the team members one-on-one to see where they are with change. This can be in their workspace or yours, or at a neutral site that is informal and social (e.g., coffee shop, lunch, bar, park, picnic table). Once people are more comfortable and stable with the change, they need to continue the momentum toward ensuring the change takes root.

New Takes Root



This involves developing a new identity, experiencing the new energy, and discovering a new sense of purpose that makes the change begin to work.

As people begin to experience successes and positive outcomes with the new change, they are also acclimating to the new ways. There may be fears that the new way may not work, so they may seek reasons to go backward and question the whole effort. It is vital for the leader to be consistent. Ask and then listen! Continue to promote and advertise successes.

Leaders can find change superstars, “converts” to or early adopters of the new way. They can help convince, coach, and lead others to make the change successful. No plan is perfect, so continue to modify it, talk openly, and find out how it is going. Make changes based on realities.

Leadership Booster #3: Inevitable Change

Case Study 1



Stan was a new manager in a national office supply store chain in a large southern city, but in a rather run down part of town. Most of his employees were high school/college students and aging back-to-work adults who needed the money to make ends meet. Some came out of retirement when their savings dwindled. These employees worked part-time for minimum wage.

Stan inherited this store, which had high turnover, high absenteeism, and low morale. This was all clear from looking at the numbers and talking to the former manager, who recently had quit because he was frustrated with trying to make things work. So Stan decided some *changes* were needed.

Stan first met individually with each employee. He wanted to find out what excited them about their job and what did not. It took about a month. Those discussions, along with the corporate goals, inspired Stan to completely restructure the scheduling. (He posted the schedule on the Intranet so all employees could put in their top three requests for the upcoming three months.)

Stan also bumped up the pay two dollars per hour, calculating that he was losing about four dollars per hour from lost productivity, theft, loss of business from disgruntled

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customers who were upset with apathetic employees, etc. Over time, he figured he would invest two dollars per hour per employee to hopefully save two dollars per hour. He also awarded incentives for sales, extra training classes, and college courses. Finally, he made the workplace fun by forming a social committee.

Some of the changes, such as the fun committee, were tough for the old-timers to embrace, and a few quit on the spot. But for every one who quit, another outsider who heard about these changes came in and applied. The morale improved almost immediately. Absenteeism plummeted, and productivity skyrocketed. It took a few months for the changes to really take hold. A few took the increase in pay but did not “step up” and perform, so they had to be counseled. A few thought it was too much work and decided to “seek success elsewhere” (i.e., they quit or were fired). Most were extremely engaged and even recruited others to work there. Though turnover tended to be high in this industry, well-qualified applicants eagerly applied due to the positive reputation of the leadership.

Is this the end? This story never ends ...

Stan continued to make changes, most brought up in weekly team “huddles,” where the entire staff showed up to enjoy free breakfasts and to share ideas about how to make things better. As changes were adopted and adapted, a change management tiger team (“Committee,” Stan decided, sounded so bureaucratic) was formed to keep their fingers on the pulse of how and why changes were succeeding or failing. The posse suggested changes to the change process at team huddles. Within twelve months of Stan’s changes, his store was one of the top ten sales forces in the entire country! Stan is still there and happy, as are his employees.

Moral: Learn what happens in transitions, and do what works for the individuals on your team. Know them - Coach them - Be patient.



Case Study 2

A major health-care network was going to merge with another with clashing cultures: one was more family oriented; one was a foreign-owned corporate giant. The family-oriented company was taking the lead on culture merging.

A large change-consulting company with years of experience was brought in to facilitate the change process. To shoot to the end of the story, the merger was *highly* successful. Why? How?

Several key processes ensured success.

- All senior leaders went through a three-day working session, facilitated by the change-consulting company, on “Leading and Thriving Through Transitions” based on Bridges’ work. The leaders went away with specific skills (practiced in the workshops) and application ideas, and each had their own coach to work with should they need one.
- They learned how to help people through the signs of grieving.
- Social media sites were developed to allow people to learn from one another, hear successes, vent, share ideas, or just talk to one another—in other words, to keep communication lines open. Leaders could and did jump in to squelch false rumors, add insights, ask questions, answer questions, etc.

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- As Bridges noted in his work, the 4 P's—the Plan, the Purpose, the Part each person plays in the change, and Paint the Picture—were always at the forefront so people kept their focus on the ultimate goals.
- Communication happened in many ways, including regular videos, town hall meetings live and online, webinars, small focus groups, e-newsletters, Intranet, and social media groups. Focusing on open, transparent, helpful, empathetic communications was key.

Changes to the strategic change plan were incorporated, as needed. Some people who did not wish to change left the company, but there were more gains and positives. The merged health-care network is one of the few making substantial profits during difficult financial times and with very low turnover/absenteeism.



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Another merger had different results. If you want to ensure failure, try it this way.

Two crosstown hospitals were the only ones in town, and they had been competitors for decades. One was well known as a family-friendly place, with a grandfatherly gentleman as CEO; everyone called him Jim. The employees had an average age of sixty-two and had worked there, on average, for thirty-eight years. There was virtually no turnover, and morale was high, but profits were fairly flat. They did not have leading-edge technology or procedures. For that you went to the other hospital.

The competitor was newer, with much younger, higher-paid professionals. It was a magnet for top doctors, as they wanted to learn on the best equipment with the most challenging cases. The newer hospital board decided it wanted to be the only game in town, so it purchased the family-oriented business across town.

The failed merger consisted of the following:

1. The newer hospital's CEO (a rising star brought in from corporate headquarters in another state to run the merger) held three town hall meetings, and every employee of the family hospital was required to attend one. He stated, "The merger is final; as of Monday, you will all be part of" the newer hospital. He

answered no questions and mainly shared all the details in forty slick PowerPoint slides during the brief thirty-minute meeting.

2. On Monday, an e-mail went out to all employees that started where there was duplication of jobs, one duplicated job and the associated person would be released within the week.
3. Rumors were rampant, and there was no attempt to clarify or squelch them.
4. Jim “retired” over the weekend after fifty-four years on the job with no word on where he went.
5. Mass quitting occurred the first week of the merger, mainly from the superstars who were in high demand in other cities and hospitals.
6. People were depressed. The new human resources department took no action to help them. They were too busy with paperwork to make the merger happen and shredding papers because the new hospital was paperless.

These actions did not address the people’s need for information, clarity, plan, purpose, their part, and what the merged organization would look like.

The merger was a total failure. The CEO of the newer hospital was recruited within the month by a headhunter and jumped off the sinking ship. The two hospitals floundered for about two years, losing many good people and a boatload of money, not to mention failing to provide good care. Eventually, the two hospitals gave up on the merger and went back to “business as usual” as two competing hospitals.

Leadership Booster Change Self-Assessment

This assessment will help you understand how well you handle change.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Change Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I openly and often share information on change issues with my team members.					
2. I am a great listener.					
3. I am empathetic to those change issues important to my team.					
4. I focus on others' needs more than I focus on my needs.					
5. I encourage talking and sharing of feelings regarding change.					
6. I support group events, interaction, and/or impromptu fun events.					
7. I have a clear plan for small wins.					
8. I meet one-on-one with team members to talk solely about how the change is going.					
9. I am a patient person.					
10. People believe what I say to them.					

g u t t e r

Leadership Booster Change Assessment by Others

This assessment will help you understand how well your leader handles change.

Leader name: _____

Check the response that you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Change Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader openly and often shares information on change issues with me.					
2. My leader is a great listener.					
3. My leader is empathetic to the change issues important to me.					
4. My leader focuses on my needs more than on their own.					
5. My leader encourages talking and sharing of feelings regarding change.					
6. My leader supports group events, interaction, and/or impromptu fun events.					
7. My leader is clear on the plan for small wins with the change.					
8. My leader meets one-on-one with me occasionally to talk solely about how the change is going.					
9. My leader is a patient person.					
10. I believe what my leader tells me.					

Based on the assessments, what are this leader's top two change strengths?

1.
2.

Based on the assessments, what are the top two areas related to change that this leader needs to improve?

1.
2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it, related to leading change?
- B. Why that one?

A.
B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to leading us through change successfully (please type or print):



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Explain the change and reasons for it. Do this over and over. Respond as quickly and clearly as you can. If you do not know, *find out*. In the absence of good information, people plug the holes with misinformation, rumors, and lies.
2. Listen, listen, listen. Do not try to talk your team members out of what they are feeling. If what they are feeling is based on bad information, help them with good information. Then listen some more.
3. Gently remind them of the reality. As they internally process the change, remind them of the change's realities, softly and gently, based on where they are with change.
4. Focus on Bridges' 4 P's. Be clear on the *purpose* (reason) of the change by asking if they understand it. Share their *part* in the new change. Share as much of the *plan* as you know and are allowed to reveal. Explain what the *picture* of the new change will likely look like.
5. Promote supportive group events, interaction, and social time for all to be together. These are real people with real emotional needs. Often, informal gatherings (with refreshments to show you care) are good forums for people to vent, talk, laugh, cry, and just be human as they grasp the realities.
6. Acknowledge and sympathize with your team. You are not bargaining or telling them what they want to hear but acknowledging, "This is a difficult and challenging change for you, and for many of us. We have to do the best we can to get through how to make this work. But I certainly know how difficult this must feel to you right now. I will be as supportive as I can to help the entire team be successful and confident in our success moving forward."
7. It takes time. Do not rush the team through their emotions. Do not expect them to embrace change overnight. Some adapt faster than others. Those who "come aboard" early can be tremendous ambassadors for the change. Ask the early adopters

to help you as you help everyone understand the *good* and *positive* parts of the change, especially early on.

8. Map out and celebrate small victories. As the change begins to take root, wherever and whenever there is success, highlight that to everyone. Find out why it was successful, and ask those who are embracing change to help those who are challenged by the change.
9. Be honest and consistent. Tell the same story to all; be consistent with the message. As the message becomes more clarified, continue to update people. Be honest. If you destroy the team's trust, they will never believe anything you have to say regarding the change.
10. Provide opportunities to practice and fail first. Yes, some will likely fail at first. Ensure that plans are in place that factor this in. Safety is of paramount importance in some changes, so failure may not be an option there. But, for most changes, expect a drop in productivity, morale, and goal attainment. It will take time for people to figure out what to do—through practice, training, learning, coaching, and trying.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #3 Inevitable Change

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{IQ} \\ + \text{EQ} \\ \hline \text{success} \end{array}$$

CHAPTER 4

Leadership Skill Booster #4: The People Skills You Must Work On

*The most important single ingredient in the formula of success
is knowing how to get along with people.*

—Theodore Roosevelt
US president

Nearly all of us have heard this comment at some point in our working lives: “Boy, he could really use some work on his people skills.”

or

“My boss is great. She has those special people skills that make you want to be a better employee, even a better person.”

So, what are they talking about when they say “people skills”?

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Let us put this fuzzy concept into concrete terms. Then you can determine how good your people skills are, based on what you think, as well as what others who know you as a leader think. Hopefully, you will use a few of the tips in this guidebook to begin to improve in those areas that you and/or others feel you need to work on. After you work on these skills with your accountability partner for at least six months, reassess with self-assessment and other/peer assessment and compare with your previous assessment. If you really focused on improving your people skills, you will see drastic improvement.

Another phrase for “people skills” in leadership literature nowadays is *emotional and social intelligence* (ESI).

Let me share a recent true story.

I was leading a daylong workshop on emotional and social intelligence for a small group of manufacturing plant supervisors. They had just worked an all-night shift and then walked into the mobile home trailer “out back” for training. They were dusty, tired, dressed in coveralls, and as big as NFL linemen. The first one who walked in locked his eyes on the projection screen in the front of the trailer. It showed these words:

Emotional Intelligence

He stood, expressionless, looked me in the eye, and asked, “We ain’t gonna cry, or hug, or talk about our mothers or nuthin’, are we?” I said, “That is not in the plan, but if the mood strikes you, go for it—at your own risk.” We both laughed.

The next workshop participant stopped upon entry to the trailer and said, “Really? Are we gonna pound a drum and ball up in the fetal position?”

It sounds like something from the ivory towers of academia. But it is really not. Emotional and social intelligence is another phrase for people skills. We have to be smart about how we bring our personalities, experiences, unique way of connecting to others, and yes, emotions, to our work environments. These experiences may be more important today than they have ever been for reasons I will share.

The Center for Creative Leadership (2002) put out an opinion paper that stated key leadership skills and perspectives *are* directly related to those vital people skills, or ESI competencies. This paper also pointed out that the absence of ESI competencies is strongly connected to career derailment (i.e., falling off the success track).

So, the importance of ESI is confirmed by research conducted by one of the leading leadership research organizations. Depending on what ESI expert you read and follow, the list of skills is different. The model that the Center for Creative Leadership put its stamp of support on is the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, or EQi. The name is not critical to remember, but the skills/competencies are *vital*.

According to the EQi, here are the fifteen people competencies/skills you need to be successful in life, along with a bit of information related to each:

People Skill	Definition
Emotional Self-Awareness	Understanding one's own feelings
Assertiveness	Expressing and standing up for oneself
Independence	Being self-directed and self-controlled
Self-Regard	Accepting oneself as good
Self-Actualization	Attaining one's full potential
Empathy	Being aware of and understanding others' feelings
Social Responsibility	Being a cooperative and constructive member of one's social group
Interpersonal Relationships	Establishing and maintaining mutually satisfying relationships
Problem Solving	Defining problems with effective solutions
Reality Testing	Aligning the subjective emotional with the objective reality
Flexibility	Adjusting to changing situations
Stress Tolerance	Coping successfully with adversity and strong emotions
Impulse Control	Resisting or delaying an impulse, drive, or action

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Happiness	Being happy and satisfied with one's life and oneself
Optimism	Having a positive attitude, especially during times of adversity

Do you wonder where your people-skills strengths lie? Assess yourself; then make copies of the assessment for others, and have them provide input to see if what you think about your skills aligns with what others think.

Leadership Booster #4: The People Skills You Must Work On

Case Study 1



Jessica was a forty-two-year-old engineer/scientist for a high-tech organization in California. She had been very successful in her career as a scientist, winning awards for her work on genetics, physics and longevity. She worked in a large scientific lab with more than one hundred other highly skilled scientists and specialists. She had risen as high as she could in the organization, without going into a management position. She thought, “I would rather be fired than be promoted to management.”

Her boss, Daniele, took her aside one day and said, “Jessica, can I take you to lunch to talk to you about an opportunity you may want to pursue?” Jessica said, “Uh-oh, am I going to be fired?” Daniele laughed and said, “Heavens no. I just want to share some insights and ideas that you may be interested in pursuing.”

At the lunch, Jessica was nervous and a little excited. Daniele said, “I will be blunt. I see something in you that makes me think there is more in store for you in this organization. I want you to be my next director of operations.” Jessica was floored. This was a *huge* promotion and pay raise, and a major change in her job function. This was *management*, something she said she would never do. But she was intrigued.

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Jessica asked, “Why me?” Daniele replied that Jessica was detail-oriented, a good listener, a skilled problem-solver, optimistic but with a realistic slant, a team player, and she cared about her teammates. These all were a good match for the director position.

Jessica said, “Daniele, I am flattered, but this is a gigantic career change for me. I need to give it some thought.” Daniele said she understood, and she asked Jessica to let her know her decision within forty-eight hours, as she needed to fill the position soon. If Jessica said no, they would need to hire a headhunter to search outside the organization.

Jessica’s role would change considerably. She needed to know that she would be able to use her intimate knowledge of the technical world to help her understand problems, but her major challenges would be dealing with, managing, leading, and caring for people. She would be supportive but would often have to make tough calls. Not everyone would love all of her decisions, and she would have to be okay with that.

Currently, Jessica was a team member. As director, she would be the team’s leader. That role was different. She could be friendly but would need to ensure she was not showing favoritism. The skills she needed to bring to this new position were different.

Jessica called Daniele the next day to ask if she would support Jessica attending a two-week “Transition to Leadership” workshop offered by the local university. Enrollment in the workshop would gain Jessica her own leadership coach for six months to use as needed. Daniele supported that.

Jessica talked to many of her team members, her networks, and her family, and decided to take the risk and accept the challenge.

Six months later, Jessica was delighted with her decision. She had learned a lot regarding how to be a more confident and competent leader. She also found a good mentor to help her with growth and development.

Moral: Sometimes you must take a leap of faith and step into the unknown to challenge yourself. Success comes from trying, failing, and succeeding, and trying some more. Leadership is a series of successes and failures combined to help yourself, your team, your organization, and society.



Case Study 2

Shelley, a first-line supervisor of three years, took her emotional and social intelligence 360-degree assessment as part of a leadership program. She received the detailed feedback report a week later, and then she sat down with her boss and went over the results. Her boss, Dave, listened as Shelley walked through what she discovered, based on the feedback provided by her direct reports, colleagues, boss, and customers.

The first thing Shelley noticed is that she was a bit harsher on herself than the evaluation groups. This surprised her a little, but she figured that maybe was better than vice versa. She also realized she was rated very strong in problem solving, optimism, and assertiveness. She was rated low in impulse control and in empathy. Though she felt good to be thought of so highly in several key areas, she also wished to improve her people skills.

Shelley's plan, with some insight from her coach (as part of the leadership program), was to study her results and decide what one or two actions in each of the areas of empathy and impulse control she felt she would incorporate over time into her leadership competency skill set. She knew results would take a while to realize; habits take a while to form.

After studying her feedback report and reading parts of good books on these topics, along with talking to those in her network whom she felt were good at empathy and impulse control, she decided to do the following:

1. Never send an e-mail when emotionally charged. Write the email and save it. After emotions calm, reread it to determine if it was appropriately worded.
2. Take at least one hour out of each day to walk around the workplace (if it is local), or to check in with as many people as possible via the phone or other personal modes communication to see how they are doing and what can be done to support them.
3. If certain people “set you off” emotionally, try to avoid them or discover what is irritating about them, and minimize the root cause.
4. Find someone with strong impulse control and/or empathy skills, and ask for their advice over time.

Shelley also shared specifically what she was going to be working on with all who provided feedback to her in the 360-degree assessment. She asked them to hold her accountable for these items, and if she struggled, they were given free rein to suggest how she may improve. And, she promised to listen.

Over time, with this plan and model to guide her, she made significant improvements. A year later, she again administered the 360-degree emotional and social intelligence assessment, and her scores were among the highest recorded in this organization. More important than scores, Shelley felt more competent and confident as a leader, her management satisfaction survey results were much improved, and the results her department recorded, along with the engagement of her team, were all very strong.

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Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Stephan hated surveys. He felt that he knew what needed to be done and who needed to do it. Why would a survey tell him anything he did not already know in his gut? So, when Stephan handed out his emotional and social intelligence survey, he told people, “Look, this survey is BS. I do not really care about the results, but the folks upstairs say we have to do it, so here. Do not waste too much time on it, as we have things to do here today.” He walked out, angry, shaking his head.

His “people” took over an hour each to fill out the detailed survey, with very specific suggestions on how Stephan could improve, as well as what he did well (this part was short). Nearly all 110 people turned it in and felt great doing it.

A week later, Stephan’s boss called him into the office. Stephan was a bit perplexed about why and a little upset as he had work to do. Stephan’s boss, Rick, said, “Stephan, we have a problem. Your scores and the comments on this survey suggest there are problems with how you lead. This is your problem, but this is also our company’s problem, and now we either fix this or find someone who can do your job better.”

Stephan responded angrily, “What do you mean? I get more done in one day than most of those others do in a week!”

“That [angry response] is exactly what I mean. Your absenteeism rates are way up, your turnover is among the highest in the business, and the HR-related grievances are many. These are symptoms of a much larger problem. Here is what we, including you, are going to do. You are going to go to a two-week, company-paid seminar on developing your people skills. You are going to work with a coach for six months. If after six months your scores on this survey do not improve by 10 percent, you will be on the outside looking in. You are costing us more money in lost man-hours and good people than you make us in solid work.”

Stephan reluctantly agreed. He went through the motions; however, he did not last six months before he elected to quit. He is still seeking employment.

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Leadership Booster People Skills Self-Assessment

These are the interpersonal and intrapersonal (people) competencies that research shows are vital for success. Rate yourself on how strongly you agree you have them.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

People Skills Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I understand my own feelings in most situations.					
2. I can express and stand up for myself.					
3. I am self-directed and self-controlled.					
4. I accept myself as good.					
5. I believe I have attained or can attain my full potential.					
6. I am aware of, and understand, others' feelings.					
7. I am a cooperative and constructive member of my social group.					
8. I establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships.					
9. I can define problems and provide effective solutions.					
10. I have congruency in subjective emotions with objective reality.					
11. I adjust well to changing situations.					
12. I cope successfully with adversity and strong emotions.					
13. I resist or delay any action that can be construed as impulsive.					
14. I get enjoyment and satisfaction from my life and myself.					
15. I have a positive attitude, especially during times of adversity.					

Leadership Booster People Skills Assessment by Others

These are the interpersonal and intrapersonal (people) competencies that research shows are vital for success. Rate how strongly your leader has them.

Leader name: _____

Check the appropriate response you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

People Skills Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader understands people's feelings in most situations.					
2. My leader can express and stand up for themselves.					
3. My leader is self-directed and self-controlled.					
4. My leader accepts that them self as good.					
5. My leader believes they can attain their full potential.					
6. My leader is aware of and understands others' feelings.					
7. My leader is a cooperative and constructive member of their social group.					
8. My leader establishes and maintains mutually satisfying relationships.					
9. My leader can define problems and provide effective solutions.					
10. My leader has congruency in subjective emotions w/ objective reality.					
11. My leader adjusts well to changing situations.					
12. My leader can cope successfully with adversity and strong emotions.					
13. My leader resists or delays any action that can be construed as impulsive.					
14. My leader gets enjoyment and satisfaction from their life and themselves.					
15. My leader has a positive attitude, especially during times of adversity.					

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Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two people skills strengths?

1. 2.

Based on these assessments, what are the top two areas related to people skills that this leader needs to improve?

1. 2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how they do it related to his/her people skills?
- B. Why that one?

A. B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving people skills (please type or print):

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Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Get an accountability partner/coach. Find someone who is very good at a people skill you wish to improve. This should be someone who can observe you in action versus someone at a great distance who cannot. Then ask this person if they will offer you tips and suggestions about what may work better for you in a particular area. You can have two or three of these people working with you at any one time. The timelier the feedback and suggestions, and the more frequent, the more likely you are to improve.
2. Be aware of your thoughts and feelings and the associated body language that shows those feelings. Look in a mirror to see what your facial expressions may be “telling” others. Practice emotional expressions, in a mirror, by yourself. See if a trusted friend or spouse will be able to guess the emotion you are trying to relay. This can be fun and funny but worth the effort.
3. Just say no. Learn to be assertive by being able to say no, in a nice, professional, acceptable way. Practice different ways, such as “My plate is simply too full right now to add more. I am sorry. I wish I could, but I would want to do a great job and I will not be able to give it my full effort.” The backup plan is always “Let me look at my schedule and commitments and get back to you by_.” This buys you time and allows you to avoid saying, “Okay, sure.”
4. Listen to your self-talk. Is it mired in harmful conversations, such as “What if I make a wrong decision? I may look foolish and feel humiliated. I will not be able to live with that type of embarrassment.” Write down arguments against these self-talk statements, as well as arguments to overcome them with positive self-talk, such as “I know part of learning is taking risks. I am willing to do this so I can be a more confident, competent person. I may even have to tell folks, ‘I am trying to work on being more self-reliant, and it is kind of empowering’.”

5. Pay close attention to others' facial expressions and body language to try to understand their feelings. Parrot back what you think others may be thinking and feeling based on those indicators. Seek verification of your assessment of the situation by asking people, "How does/did that make you feel?" In other words, do not be afraid of validating others' feelings.
6. Write down three worthwhile things/actions you can do to help others. These may be family members, community organizations, coworkers, or even strangers. Pick items you are passionate about and know would help you feel like a more well- rounded person/team member. Commit to the actions. Have a timeline of when you will do them. Examples are getting coworkers to share one positive action they took at work, or asking what each person did that day to make a positive difference in someone's life.
7. Try to be more sociable and socialize more; people like and are more attracted to sociable people. Think about ways you can meet and network with people (see booster on networking) and what you can do with others and for them. Make a real effort not to let friendships get cold. Try reconnecting with old friends or acquaintances you have not seen in a while. Use social media to reconnect, if appropriate. People will see you as more likable and will respond more positively to you.
8. De-stress. In our hectic world, it may help to divide larger tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks and concentrate only on those tasks that truly require your attention at the moment. Exercise. Take a walk with someone. Move. Change your scenery. Take a break. Breathe deeply. Close your eyes and visualize a pleasant memory, place, or time.
9. Fun, fun, fun. What do you find that is fun in life? What makes you smile and brings you happiness? Seek ways to add more fun to your daily routine. See *fun* as a valuable and worthy goal in and of itself. When possible, surround yourself with happy people and avoid downer people. Complain less; enjoy more. Identify what makes you unhappy, and minimize or eliminate it. Smile more; frown less. Look in a mirror if you cannot tell the difference!
10. Focus on affirming others. Give more positive feedback. Try to suppress your pessimistic self-talk. Find out what boosts their morale. Everyone is unique. One size of morale boosting words and actions does not fit all.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #4 The People Skills You Must Work On

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

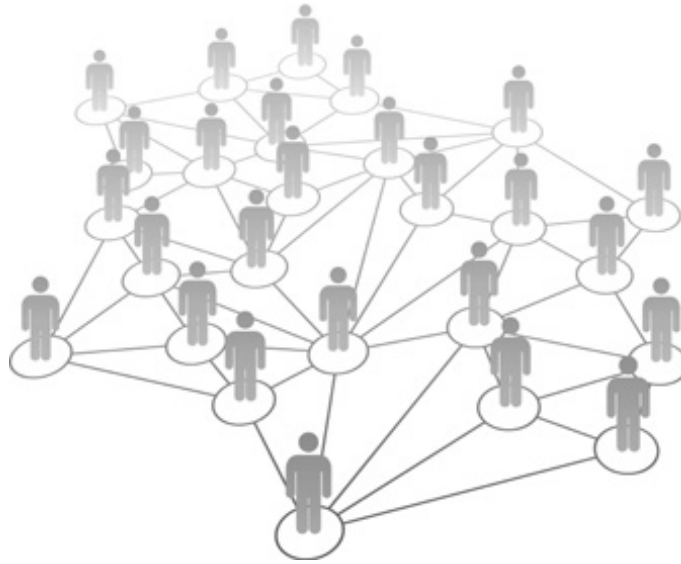
Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____

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CHAPTER 5

Leadership Skill Booster #5: Networking for Mega-Success

The way of the world is meeting people through other people.

—Robert Kerrigan networking expert

Networking is the ability to be in touch with so many ... to make useful and genuine long-term connections with others. It may help to think of a network as a spider web or a fishing net. One person knows another person, who knows others, who knows others. Each contact and connection is potentially helpful, and someone who can be helped. *Do not* think of networking as “who you know” to get a job. It is so much more. But networking takes work.

This booster is about relationship networking. Sure, you can do some of this via social networking sites. But before you dive into LinkedIn, let us really understand what networking is: the good, old-fashioned, interpersonal, often face-to-face, tailored-to-the-person networking. There are skills to it that we have to learn. Here, you will learn

how. Networking maybe the most vital skill you never knew that you did not know, but you need to know.

The explosion of social media has greatly increased our ability to stay in touch. People are reconnecting with high school chums, former colleagues, long-ago friends, and far-away family. We will get more into technology leveraging by leaders in Booster #7.

This portion of the skill boosters guide focuses on networking skills that seem to be eroding. Yet, these skills are *still* vital to doing what networking expert and widely read author Anne Boe (1995) says are the reasons we network: to RAISE the bar of success. We network to gain:

R = Referrals

A = Advice

I = Information

S = Support

E = Energy

Boe says, “Networking is a mutual desire to share the joy of giving and the joy of receiving.” Most people feel the purpose of networking is to get the other person to do something for you.

Think of your bank or mutual fund account. You have to deposit money to get more money back later with interest. That is what networking is. You help others by offering referrals, advice, information, support, and energy. *Do not expect anything in return!* You may well get something in return, perhaps even tenfold. You simply may not know when, how, where, or why. You network for the joy of some, or all, of the RAISE actions. Think about it. If you only take money out of a bank and never put any in, what happens? Bankruptcy. The same is true with relationships.

“Networking consists of creating links with people we know in an organized way, for a specific purpose of sharing and adding value while expecting nothing in return” (Boe 1995, 20).

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Here is what it is not: “Hi, I am Dave Smith, and we used to work for the same boss. Anyway, I see you are a VP where I want to work. Wondered if we can meet to see how I can help you reach your goals. What do you say?”

This is a very loose link. It comes off as too abrupt and is an inappropriate first connection. Expecting this semi-stranger to reach out and help me aboard? Really?

I doubt Dave will get a return call or e-mail from this VP. Networking is an ongoing process. It is not a one-time event. It does not only happen in large conferences or social settings. It happens every day in many ways. Think of it as a way of life, continually thinking of people we know and keeping our radars sweeping for ways to mutually enhance skill sets.

We all should have life and career goals. They drive us to a degree. Driving is the joyful part of the trip, not just arriving at the destination. We need to see networking as an action verb, not a one-time event. It is ongoing, always thinking of others and their needs. But network in an *organized* way or you will quickly be overwhelmed.

At the heart of networking is caring, caring about others and their success. Actually, looking at all of these Leadership Skill Boosters, one could easily argue that the heart of leading is *caring*. If you do not care about others, you will not do networking well. If you only care about your success, you will fall into the huge category of many failed leaders. The newspapers, TV talk shows, bookstore shelves, and even prisons are filled with examples of leaders who did not care about others. People see this. They know this. They seek to separate from this person.

Now, back to networking skills that are eroding. Networking is the ability to relate to and communicate with other people in any situation. People are losing this skill. Perhaps reliance on technology to communicate or increasing incivility has hampered our ability. We have less and less opportunity to “work a crowd.”

Some human behavior experts say that mingling in a large group of strangers is the number one fear of human beings. Wow. That is more than public speaking, flying, heights, or death. So those equipped with skills and confidence and competence to effectively network are head and shoulders above most people.

By now, you probably get that networking is important, yet often poorly done. A new driver must learn the rules of the road before he or she can be a good driver. The same is true with networking. Let us look at a few of the more common, need-to-know rules of the networking road.

Ten Guiding Rules to Effective Networking

1. Be clear on what networking can do for others, and for you.
2. Expect great things. Settle for no less.
3. Plan for networking success. Again, *plan* it.
4. Update your plan and your networking contacts and connections on a weekly basis.
5. Read a good book on networking to identify the networking skills you need.
6. Practice those skills.
7. Build relationships by putting others first. One great way to do that is to follow the rules on great questioning in the Coaching Leadership Skill Booster.
8. Seek to add value to others you meet, as practical and appropriate.
9. Develop your three key stories: (a) how to introduce yourself in a unique way, (b) be prepared to share what you have done successfully in your life if asked or helpful to the conversation, and (c) what your passions and strengths are. Practice them so they sound natural when you share them, not read. Be prepared to teach others how to do these three tasks, too. Some may call this the thirty-second elevator speech; this is what you say if, for instance, you are on an elevator and your CEO hops on and asks who you are and what you do there.
10. Be persistent but not annoying, and believe that nothing will get in the way of you being successful in reaching your goal.

Leadership Skill Booster #5: Networking for Mega-Success

Case Study 1



Teresa was a rising star in the XYZ Company. She always seemed to be in the right place at the right time for success to come her way. What luck! Beth, a relative newcomer to the company, noticed this in Teresa. One day Beth asked Teresa, “Can I meet with you sometime to ‘pick your brain’ on how to effectively network to be successful?” Teresa gladly agreed and they found a mutually satisfying time.

When they met, Beth said, “Teresa, everyone I talk to says you are lucky. You get the jobs you want, are rising fast in XYZ Company, and always seem to have your stuff together. You just exude success. Can you tell me how you do this?”

Teresa took a long sip of her tea, looked at Beth, and said, “Luck has very little to do with it. You make your own luck, Beth. You know that. Some of whatever success I have achieved is due to my work and ability to effectively network. Notice that part of that word, networking, is *work*. I have a system I use to help others and work with people. I did not make it up. I had a superb boss years ago who mentored, and she shared some of her success tips. Her biggie was she knew how to network.”

Beth said, “What do you mean by networking? That term is always being tossed around.”

Teresa shared that networking is just what it says: working on expanding a big net, not to pull in fish, but to touch others and help them be successful, and perhaps they help you be successful, too. “You see, Beth, the more I can help others seek and find success, the more success usually comes back to me. It is my goal to know others’ needs, wants, challenges, and skills, and connect them, cast a net out to troll for ways to help them.”

Teresa told Beth that she simply pays attention. She makes mental notes of what others seem to care about. This helps hers funnel ideas and possibilities to people as she notices them in her daily work.

Teresa told Beth to do a few things over the next couple of weeks, and then they could meet again to see how it was going for her. They made an appointment for their next meeting to talk networking (by the way, this is also effective mentoring in action).

Teresa told Beth to try the following over the course of the next several weeks to see what kind of difference it made in her life, and in the lives of others:

1. List everyone in your personal network that you think can benefit from your use of the RAISE model.
2. Decide on one way to help at least 5 of those people and follow through...for no reason other than you feel it will help that person to grow professionally.

Over the next few weeks, Beth shared tidbits of referrals, advice, information, support, and energy with at least 5 others in her network More than once Beth got a verbal thank-you, a thank-you note, a warm hug, or a return favor.

When Teresa and Beth met again, Teresa said “I am impressed, Beth! I would ask how you are doing with the plan, but I know. People are saying, ‘Beth shared ... and Beth told me about ... or Beth referred me to someone who was a huge help with a project I was working on.’ But you go ahead and tell me how you think it is going.”

Beth said, “Teresa, I was skeptical that what you shared would make much of a dent in my life. But, after several hours upfront of planning how and whom I could perhaps help, and then working the plan, I got so much out of it. I was so energized by the work to help

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others that I did not really care what came back to me. I did not. I'm starting to love this networking thing.”

Teresa smiled. She knew the feeling. She had it when she started, and she had it every day of her life now because the RAISE model is so helpful. When you do that, you *will* get payback.

Beth has had resounding success in her life and continues to find success. She has shared her lessons with many of her protégés. Teresa became CEO of XYZ, and the company flourishes.



Case Study 2

Toni had a pretty good job out of college, but she was not confident (with all the downsizing) that she had a long-term future with her company. She went to see her uncle, a very successful businessman who had recently retired. When they met, he asked her what professional associations she belonged to. She mentioned two. He said, “Of those, what have you done to add value to its members? Have you volunteered to help them in any way by serving on a committee, taking a leadership role, speaking to the group, etc.?” Toni had not. She rarely went to a meeting. He said, “You need to attend meetings, and in your first one, find a board member, preferably the president, and tell that person who you are and that you wish to volunteer to help in any way you can. Then do whatever you can to be great at whatever tasks you have volunteered to do.”

Toni said, “What else?” Her uncle replied, “Start there. When you are fully engaged, give me a call and I will tell you what you may wish to do next.”

Toni was, of course, put to use on several committees and met a number of interesting and widely networked people in the community. More importantly, she really liked the work she did. She felt she was good at it. One member of one committee shared the RAISE model with Toni, and she was already putting it to use.

About three months down the road, the future of her position with the company looked like it was in jeopardy. Toni called her uncle and asked, “Can we meet again?” They met,

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Toni brought her uncle up to speed, and her uncle said, “I am proud of you for taking my advice and doing the hard work of networking—or at least the beginning. Now you need to share your work situation with all those you have worked with, and ask them to please keep you in mind for any place seeking someone with your skills, experience, and education. *Do not ask people for jobs. Share what you seek, and ask them to please keep you in mind if they hear of something.*”

Toni had no sooner said those words at the next committee meeting, where they were preparing for a large conference in town, then the committee chair said to her, “Toni, get me your resume *yesterday*. We have an opening you would be perfect for at our place.” Toni did and got the job. She has never been happier.

Networking works!

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Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Suzanne hated her job. She told everyone she met that her boss was maybe the worst person in the world. Suzanne was not allowed to do much of anything without asking permission. Many days she had to figure out how to fill eight hours with only ten minutes worth of work. She surfed the web for cake recipes and places to go on vacation (all two weeks she got each year, and she was not going again for eight months!). She spent a lot of her day gossiping with friends and cubicle neighbors, and scolding her kids via the phone.

When downsizing actions needed to be taken, Suzanne found out her job was no longer needed at this company. So, she was let go.

She went to see her boss about it, but she was on vacation. Suzanne was unprepared for what came next. She had not done any professional networking during those ten years nor had she joined any professional and/or educational organizations to learn, improve, or meet people who could enhance her life. She had done little to enrich the lives of others during that time. She assumed she would have a job for life, so what was the point of cultivating friendships and colleagues? Now, she *needed* help, but little help came her way.

Suzanne has been unemployed for nearly a year, and she still has not done much to get connected to places where she might meet others. She feels she's the one who needs help.

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Suzanne needs a magic wand to go back in time, about ten years or more, to start networking and do it for the right reasons. Then, if and when she needed to tap into her networks for assistance, she would have enough deposits to be able to make a withdrawal.

Leadership Booster Networking Self-Assessment

This will help you to understand how well you know how to network for mega-success.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Networking Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I am clear about what networking can do for me.					
2. I have very high expectations for the value of networking.					
3. I have a clear plan for networking success.					
4. I update my plan periodically.					
5. I know what networking skills I need to work on.					
6. I practice the skills I need to work on.					
7. I am skilled at building relationships with others.					
8. I seek to add value to others by using the RAISE model of networking success.					
9. I have an interesting way to introduce myself and can, if asked, provide examples of successes I have had.					
10. I am persistent but not annoying in my networking goals.					

Leadership Booster Networking Assessment by Others

This will help you to understand how well your leader knows how to network with others for mega-success.

Leader name: _____

Check the response that you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Networking Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader is clear on what networking can do for our team.					
2. My leader has very high expectations for the value of networking for our team.					
3. My leader has a clear plan for networking success.					
4. My leader updates their networking plan often.					
5. My leader knows what networking skills they need to work on.					
6. My leader practices the skills they need to work on.					
7. My leader is skilled at building relationships with others.					
8. My leader seeks to add value to others using the RAISE model of networking.					
9. My leader has an interesting way to introduce themselves and can share success stories, if asked.					
10. My leader is persistent but not annoying in their networking.					

Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two networking strengths?

1. 2.

Based on the assessments, what are the top two areas related to networking this leader needs to improve?

1. 2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it related to networking?
- B. Why that one?

A. B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving networking skills (please type or print):

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Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Be clear on what networking can do for others and for you. It is a set of skills to be learned that will allow for mutual assistance in help you and others meet your professional goals. Focus on others *first and foremost*. This is the biggest mistake and misunderstanding out there. It is not about who can help you. It is about whom you can help. Three quick examples are sending the link to a helpful website to a colleague or friend who may benefit from the information, calling a former teammate to see how that person likes his or her new position, and sending a book you have read on leadership (such as this one) to a friend because you think it could prove helpful to their leadership efforts. Do it because you want to see others be successful.
2. Expect positive outcomes from networking. Expect your assistance to others to be worth the efforts. Will it always hit the bull's-eye? Of course not. Will those you help always appreciate it? Probably, even if you do not get that direct feedback. In this world of busy-ness and business, someone who puts *your* needs before his or her own is very, very rare. You will stand out if you make this your habit. You are doing this to help others.
3. Plan, plan, plan. Plan for networking success. Again, plan it. Read a book on networking—a good one is *Networking Success* by Anne Boe (1995), but there are many others available. Read it. Plan it. Do it. Practice it. Have a system that will work for you.
4. Update information. Update your plan and your networking information at least monthly. People change. Situations change. You need to have accurate information.
5. The skills. What are the networking skills you need? Below are ten tips that I love and used with permission from *RainToday's Face-to-Face Networking Guide* (2007).



When it comes to networking, use the resources you currently have available, then broaden them by expanding your efforts. Be precise, but do not overlook the hidden potential around you.

You can network anywhere, with anyone. When looking for organizations to join, choose groups where you can make a contribution and will be interested in what is going on.

Communicating your message is a means of gaining credibility that is best accomplished through substance, not style. Listening and asking questions helps you build rapport and trust. Practice your communications until you feel confident that your message will come across as genuine.

Most of us cannot just show up at an event, stand around, and expect people to come up and talk to us. Be proactive; start conversations with others. This does not mean you have to be the center of attention and the life of the party. Simply be yourself and approach someone; the rest will fall into place.

Keep the conversation fresh and interesting. Balance the amount that you talk with the amount that the other person is talking, and ask open-ended questions.

Exit quickly from conversations that are not good matches. When you find good conversations with people who could be the right fit, do not be too quick to leave.

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A few rich conversations and good new connections are better than talking to everyone, whether they person is a good match or not.

When it comes to networking, knowing what not to do is as important as knowing what to do. For example, at a professional conference, you never simply walk up to someone you know fairly well, shove a resume in his or her hand, and say you want the person's help finding work.

No matter which method you choose, follow-up is crucial. Follow-up turns a casual contact made at a meeting, party, or event into a potential long-term relationship.

In the end, networking is all about building relationships that are honest, sincere, and of value to both parties. As you work to stay in touch, try to develop relationships that benefit the other party as much as they do you. Build relationships for the long term.

The best part about building relationships is that whatever you put in comes back to you. More and better relationships mean a greater likelihood of generating leads that may turn into opportunities.

6. Practice networking skills. It will make you much more confident. You will gain a lot of competence at networking. After you practice, reflect on what you did and how you can improve at the next networking opportunity. Practice networking with a friend and request feedback.
7. Relationships! Build relationships. See connections to others as potentially rich, vibrant, and perhaps long-term relationships. Seek ways to connect with other people. Mutual support is a goal.
8. Seek to add value to others, where appropriate. Adopt the mind-set of "How can I add value to that person?" This will help you discover ways to find out what other people need and want. Then assess how you can add richness to their goals. Little things, such as sharing job possibilities posted on a website or interesting articles, or volunteering to help them on a project without being asked, can be rewarding. It also has an added benefit of putting you in the forefront of positive thinking in their minds and hearts.

9. Your stories. Develop your three key stories: (a) how to introduce yourself in a unique way, (b) what you have done successfully in your life, and (c) what your passions and strengths are. Practice these in your “thirty-second elevator speech” so it sounds natural when you share it.
10. Never quit—ever. As former coach of the North Carolina State Wolfpack, the late Jim Valvano, said in his farewell speech on ESPN, “Do not give up; do not ever give up.” Same for networking. Be persistent and believe that nothing will get in the way of successfully reaching your goal to be a more capable and confident networker. Your goal includes helping others reach their goals. This, in turn, will repay you a hundredfold. Networking is never-ending, but hopefully it is a joyful, lifelong activity.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Skill Booster #5 Networking for Mega-Success

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 6

Leadership Skill Booster #6: Coaching and Mentoring Others

Training alone improves leadership skills by 22 percent. When combined with coaching, improvement jumps to 77 percent.

—Fortune magazine

When we think of a coach, our first thoughts may be of the clichéd autocratic, tough, “my way or the highway” athletic coach who barks commands from the sidelines.

But this leadership skill booster focuses our attention on the leadership skill of coaching. The verb. What is it? How do we do it? How do we do it well? Coaching competence is a vital skill for today’s dynamic workplace, with its changing, multicultural, geographically dispersed workforce. Yet it is a misunderstood and an underused skill, mostly because leaders do not know how to do it and/or do not know why it is so vital.

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

The American Society for Training and Development defines coaching as “a conversation that helps others reach their goals. (2005)” The focus of coaching is on the *other* person and their goals. The five skills most needed, yet least used in coaching, are (1) listening, (2) asking the right questions, (3) being curious, (4) improving motivation for change or action, and (5) putting aside your personal agenda.

Once you understand each skill a little more clearly, you can begin to find great ways to improve your own coaching skill set.

Listening

Just about any management or leadership course, seminar, or book will emphasize the imperative of being a *good listener*. Someone once said we have two ears and one mouth, and we should use them in that proportion. The need to listen may be an even higher ratio. You may feel you have to talk to prove your worth, but you must listen to determine when to add worth.

Asking the right questions

The importance of skilled and timely questioning cannot be stressed enough. Combined with listening, questioning is a skill that leaders may not do well. We were never really taught what questions to ask and when. One resource you may find useful is *Coaching Questions: A Coach's Guide to Powerful Asking Skills* by Tony Stoltzfus (2009).

Being curious

Wanting to learn more about people (team members, fellow workers, etc.) drives leaders to get at the root of any situation, so they can add value to seeking a workable solution. Skilled listening and questioning are evidence of curiosity.

Improving motivation for change or action

A highly respected person once shared with me that *all* motivation is internal. With so much written about internal and external motivation, I questioned my friend. He told

me to think about it...We have to know what motivates another—money, power, fame. When we know that, we can tailor my leadership efforts, to a degree, to scratch that itch. If you get more of what you seek for happiness and satisfaction, you are more motivated. We are all humans with needs. If we, as leaders, know what those needs are, we can be much more effective, which can help turn activity into productive action focusing on needed changes.

Putting aside your personal agenda

If a leader has a personal agenda and tries to coach that agenda into a person, several things derail these efforts. (1) Most people see through this, or they hear it before they see it for themselves. (2) The leader is perceived as shallow, narrowly focused, or out for themselves. Coaches with personal agendas are *not* respected or followed. (3) People do the minimum on the personal agenda. Usually, the leader does not last long for lack of organizational goal attainment or those being led seek their success elsewhere.

What does it take to be an effective coach? Take the assessment and give it to others to assess your ability to coach.

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Leadership Booster Coaching Self-Assessment

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Coaching Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I believe in the potential of each person I coach.					
I can be unattached to an issue so I can look at it objectively.					
If I do not know an answer, I do not feel I must fix the situation right away.					
I can keep my coaching approach light and fun.					
I am very curious.					
I am a great listener.					
I am great at asking appropriate, timely questions.					
I am skilled at being able to put aside my personal agenda.					
I am good at building awareness in a person before feeling the need for action.					
I am knowledgeable of many skillful coaching tactics.					

Leadership Booster Coaching Assessment by Others

Leader name: _____

Check the response that you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Coaching Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader believes in the potential of each person they try to coach.					
2. My leader can be unattached to an issue, no matter how close to it they are.					
3. If my leader does not know an answer, my leader does not feel they must fix something right away.					
4. My leader can keep their coaching approach light and fun.					
5. My leader is very curious.					
6. My leader is a great listener.					
7. My leader is great at asking appropriate, timely questions.					
8. My leader is skilled at being able to put aside their personal agenda to help me.					
9. My leader is good at building awareness in a person before feeling the need for action.					
10. My leader is knowledgeable of many skillful coaching tactics.					

Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two coaching strengths?

1. 2.

Based on these assessments, what are the top two areas related to coaching this leader needs to improve?

1. 2.

A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it related to coaching?

B. Why that one?

A. B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving coaching (please type or print):

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Leadership Skill Booster #6: Coaching and Mentoring Others

Case Study 1



Daniel supervised thirty shift workers in a telecommunications manufacturing facility in the Northeast. He had been a supervisor for nearly two years. In that time, he had experienced growing turnover and absenteeism. It was not off-the-charts bad, but it concerned him. He had surveyed the workers but did not uncover much as to the root cause. One day, Daniel was standing alone at lunch in the cafeteria and reading the company newsletter when he saw a notice about a speaker coming to a hotel nearby, and he knew this speaker.

The speaker was Seth Corbin, and he had been Daniel's professor in his organizational leadership undergraduate program at the local university. Daniel remembered Dr. C. as bright, engaging, knowledgeable, and downright hilarious. Before he was a leadership professor, Dr. C. had been a vice president of organizational development for a Fortune 500 company. Dr. C. would be talking on "Coaching Isn't Telling: New Age Ideas in a New Age World."

Daniel attended the event, and he arrived early, in hopes of catching Dr. C. before the talk. There were about two hundred others already in the room. "Great! I will never get to see Dr. C.," Daniel muttered.

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

About that time, Dr. C. tapped Daniel on the shoulder in the hallway and said, “Danny, how is everything in the trenches?” They shook hands and hugged.

Dr. C. said he had to get “mic’d up” for the presentation, but asked Daniel what he was doing after the event. He had to catch a red-eye to Paris but had a few hours to kill. Perhaps Daniel could drive him to the airport and they could chat.

In his presentation Dr. C. shared useful ideas on what coaching as a leadership skill looked and felt like. He had people come up on stage and role-play, with him being the “Ghost of Coaching Past” and the “Ghost of Coaching Future.” He ensured that everyone in attendance would receive a copy of his book with specific tips and ideas on how to improve their coaching skills.

After driving to the airport, Danny and Dr. C settled into a bar booth at the terminal. Dr. C. pointedly asked, “What is it, Daniel? You have been dying to ask me something all night.”

“Okay, here goes. I am not doing well at work. I mean, we get product out the door pretty well, but the morale and day-to-day stuff with my people is just average. I do not connect with them or feel much from them. We just coexist, work in the same building.” Daniel went on for a bit with some examples. Then he stopped.

Dr. C. stared at him and then looked out the window. “Daniel, I dumped a lot on you tonight at that workshop. But there are a few key things I think you need to think about doing as far as becoming more of a coaching leader—more than what you feel is a traditional leader role. What do you think they are?”

From all he heard Dr. C. talk about, Daniel felt he needed to do three things:

1. Be curious to find out what his people are thinking and feeling.
2. Ask questions more and tell them what to do less. Ask the right questions.
3. Listen—really listen—to their answers.

Dr. C. said, “That is why you were one of my favorite students. You listen, you apply, and you care. I think you picked three of the ones I would have picked for you.” They laughed.

The professor told Daniel to keep in touch and said, “Focus on those three items for a month, and then get back to me and let me know how things are going for you. Give it a month. It will take time for them to see and believe this is the new and improved Danny.”

Daniel called Dr. C. one month later. Morale was improving by leaps and bounds. Daniel had made it a point to meet one-on-one, with each of his team members. He asked questions such as the following:

- What would you miss the most about this job if you won the lottery and did not have to work?
- If you waved a magic wand, what would you change about the way I work with you and our team?
- What can I do to make your work life more fulfilling?
- Where do you see yourself in three years, and how can I support you getting what you seek?

Daniel took notes, listened intently, and asked clarifying questions, sharing a bit about his own life that was relevant to their conversation. They became more human together, caring and connecting. From that airport meeting onward, Daniel saw work not as a place to go to for a paycheck, but a place to go to serve others so they could be more successful. Daniel’s whole attitude changed to one of positivity, service, caring, and getting personal; and it was contagious throughout the team.



Case Study 2

Rick had a mix of people he managed. He was recognized as one of the best leaders in the company, based on culture surveys. He had a meteoric rise to the top, and there were several key reasons he was a very effective leader.

He realized he had some superior performers. Those were his go-to folks he could always count on. They got their work done on time or early, and it was always top-notch. They never complained, and they carried much of the load because they were so good.

He also had some rather weak performers, though there were only a few of those. They were misfits or folks with limited ability. Some were emotional wrecks. Others were performance problem children. Some just needed more training.

Then there was the majority. That is, they were pretty steady performers, often lifting themselves up to superior status but occasionally dropping into the weaker performer group. Overall, they were pretty solid and the largest percentage of his workforce.

Rick had been mentored by very competent, caring leaders, and that worked well for him. He involved his superior performers in key decisions and recognized that many of them liked to teach others. This group of superior performers also wanted to be challenged and stretched professionally. He ensured they received adequate and appropriate training to help them reach their goals. He knew from talking with them and listening that they

liked to know how much he valued them and wanted him to spend time with them. Some wished to be promoted; others did not. In other words, he found out what motivated the top performers and helped put actions into play that touched those motivations.

His consistently average performers needed to have their confidence built by increasing their responsibilities and giving them frequent, accurate, and timely feedback. Rick taught them how to set goals. He also focused on catching them in the act of doing something right and told them how proud he was to have them on the team. Rick was quick to pair an average performer with a superior performer who volunteered for, and was skilled at, mentoring. (This also relieved Rick of some of the workload and energized that tandem.)

Rick realized the weaker performers needed to be assessed to find out why they were low producers. He was constantly asking himself, “What can I do to help them be successful?” He did not believe in finding ways to get the low performers out the door. He realized he should be seeking options and approaches that would keep them on this side of the exit door. Sometimes it was training they needed. So he made every effort to get it for them. If it was a coaching/mentoring issue, he attempted to help low performers by connecting them with someone who was skilled at what they needed to learn. If it was a personal issue at home, Rick tried to privately find out what, if anything, he could suggest that could help them on that front. The bottom line to Rick’s enormous success as a leader: He cared. He got involved. He listened. Rick asked good, open-ended questions. And finally, his philosophy was that cutting the low performers from the team (moving or firing them) was the last option, not the first.



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Trey had problems. His workers did not do what he told them to do, or they did not do it well. So he told them again. He wrote them up in their personnel file. Absenteeism was high. Productivity was low. Turnover was high. He was in a constant fight with human resources to get more good people and went to various grievance sessions with “these losers,” as he called them. “Why can’t we get anyone who knows anything? I am constantly cleaning up their messes; they are just incompetent.” Yet, when they left Trey’s department and went into another department, many of these so-called losers would shine brightly.

Trey did not spend any time with his people, other than chastising them. He invested virtually no time listening to their problems. Trey often commented, “I am not their mother. If they have a problem, fix it.”

Trey was fired from the company. He is still looking for a job.



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Communicate clear expectations to the team. If they do not know and you do not tell them, they will fill in the holes/gaps with misinformation, guesses, and rumors. Ask them if they can tell you what your expectations are.
2. Building relationships is one of the most misunderstood and poorly done parts of coaching and leading. This does not mean you have to be best buddies with everyone in the organization. It does mean you have to be fair, open-minded, caring, supportive, involved, available, and respectful. Relationships are built one person at a time, over a long time. You do it because you care about their success and the organization's success. Do this, and success will come.
3. Give frequent feedback. This is not the annual evaluation. This is ongoing, timely, specific, relevant, and helpful advice, insights, and observations. It is positive: "I noticed you helped Sarah with her project yesterday, and I want to thank you for offering your support. I appreciate it when you do things like that, and I know Sarah does because she told me." It can also be constructively critical like "I wonder if there is a good time for us to talk about some ways to deal with customer complaints so they work out a bit better than the one with Mr. Jones did this morning. When is a good time?"
4. Listen actively by focusing on the team members while listening. Do not multitask or look away. Give nonverbal acknowledgment that you hear them and occasionally make clarifying statements or ask clarifying questions. "That must be difficult to hear from your friend" or "What did you do next?" Reflect back on the content to them in a statement or question.
5. Help remove obstacles. Know the person, his or her goals, and his or her dreams for success. What can you do to support that person? Are there obstacles that prevent

- the person from being more satisfied, complete, engaged, and energized to reach their goals? How can you help to eliminate or minimize the impact of those obstacles?
6. Offer emotional support. Often that is all people really want or need. They often do not come to you to *fix* something. Be there for them.
 7. Offer gentle advice and guidance. Your wisdom and your distance from the details of their situation are your strengths. Be gentle; take your time in sharing insight. Ask more questions to tease out what is really going on. Offer guidance when questioning hits a dead end. Ask if your guidance makes sense for the person and the situation.
 8. Allow the team members time to model the desired performance and behaviors. If they find a solution that feels as though it will work, allow time for it to work, and allow time for that person to reconnect with you to get additional insights as the behaviors begin to change.
 9. Gain a commitment from the person you are helping. The person may want to do something, change how they do something, or stop doing something. Get them to be clear about what they will be changing or doing, especially if this is a behavioral change issue. It helps you both to be clear about what is going to happen afterward.
 10. Good results and performance deserve applause. Nearly everyone gets too little positive feedback and praise. Sure, you could overdo praise. But when someone does a really nice job, a simple “Thank you for your work on: I appreciate it and you” is *all* that is needed. You can find books, such as *1001 Ways to Reward Employees (2010)* by Bob Nelson, to give you creative ideas on how to applaud. You do not need to invent them. Find one that fits the person and situation, and *do it*.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #6
Coaching and Mentoring Others

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) __commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 7

Leadership Skill Booster #7: Leveraging Technology

*It has become appallingly obvious that our technology
has exceeded our humanity.*

—Albert Einstein German physicist

First, let me assure you up front: this leadership skill booster is *not* a how-to on the use of the seemingly infinite number of technology tools at our disposal. It is a *wake-up call* to ensure that you are open to what technology can do to enhance your ability to lead others. This chapter will share some cautions to counteract the almost intoxicated state many leaders get into with new technology rollouts.

Be clear: leaders use technology; technology does *not* use leaders.

We are not playing out a scene from *The Terminator*, where machines take over the earth ... well, not yet anyway. Simply because a new technology tool pops up on our

radars (as they do daily) does not mean we have to immediately have it, use it, and be expert at it. Let us explore some ideas that will, hopefully, get you thinking the next time you grab that smartphone or iPad/iPod, or visit a social media site.

It is important to understand how leaders can use and connect in order to leverage (put to best use) their leadership reach and skills. It is equally important in this fast-paced world to understand how and why leaders need to *disconnect* from those they lead in order to do a better job of leading. Thus, this booster will focus on two vital concepts: how to connect with others, and how to *disconnect* from others.

How to Connect

Learn What Technology Is Available

New social media comes out every hour, it seems. There will always be a newer model, a better option, more features, easier buttons, wider reach, and yadda yadda. I recall the day my boss said to a department of twenty-five faculty, “I have great news, everyone. You *all* will be getting the new iPad next week!” The cheers that rose up were so loud, people came upstairs to make sure everyone was okay. I sat there wondering, “What am I missing here?”

Two things occurred to me after that: (1) is technology really *that* vital to all we do, and (2) what *am* I missing?

Of course, we cannot, nor should we, adopt or adapt to every new technology. But leaders should be aware of new tools and approaches. Many dismiss new technology as irrelevant, usually because they already have their preferred method of doing something or do not wish to learn. Educate yourself to see what is out there and how it could, or maybe would not, help you lead other people. Talk to tech-smart people, who can help you understand the pros and cons and possibilities. Maybe it is your teenager who can do this. Maybe it is someone in your networks. But find out and learn. Then decide what works for you. Make technology *work for you*; you are not there to force new tools to fit you.

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

You also do not want to be the one at your workplace who cannot participate in a discussion because you have never even heard of a certain technology. It is important to have a broad overview of relevant technology, especially how it can help you be a more positive- impacting leader. The important thing here is not to adopt every new technology but to be familiar with it and, if possible, use it, even if it means just going through a demonstration.

Social Networking Sites Are Not Just Social Anymore

When social networking sites started out years ago, they were riddled with personal material. Things have changed. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and blogs are just a few social networking sites that respected organizations all over the globe use to communicate news in real time. Some of the organizations that use social networking sites are CNN, *the Economist*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, and *Fortune*.

With top quality social networking sites, not only can you find topics directly related to being a more effective, confident, and competent leader, but you also can obtain real-time information about a topic instead of waiting for a paper on the subject to be published. This is especially important for any leader who wants to stay current with relevant information and tips.

Front Page of *USA Today*?

Never put anything on the Internet or in an e-mail that you would not want on the front page of *USA Today*, period. Kevin Eikenberry, a colleague and skilled consultant, recently gave a seminar in which he spoke about appropriate and inappropriate material on the web.

After the presentation, someone asked him if it was okay to have “borderline” pictures on the Internet. Kevin said that if you ever have reservations about putting up a picture, *do not do it*. When in doubt, *keep it out of circulation*.

Unfortunately, even password-protected sites can be compromised, and have been. In the past, several sites have had information that was supposed to remain private go

public, even if it was only for a few hours. Nothing is completely safe on the Internet, and that should be the rule of thumb for posting pictures, comments, or anything else that you do on the web. When you think about the longevity of your career, also think about how things that you post on the Internet today could be potentially harmful to you in the future. Again, if you have to think about whether or not to post something on the Internet, that is a sign. Do not!

Be Part of the Discussion and Participate

The Internet and social media are wonderful *tools* for leaders; they allow you to learn by using just a computer. You no longer have to go to the library. That is great news for those professionals seeking information to make them better at leading, whether it is finding the best activity to use in a workplace retreat on conflict or seeking great questions to ask in a feedback session. In addition, it is important to be able to participate and join in the conversation on leadership subjects.

With individualized social networking sites, you can discuss specific topics with leaders in your field. It is rare to get that kind of access to leaders without attending a conference or being part of their immediate circle, but in the age of the Internet, you likely can gain access through social media for teaching, sharing, and learning. Most leaders who use social networking sites do so because they want feedback, wish to encourage discussion, and want people to ask questions. Participating shows that you are brave enough to enter the discussion and that you have something worth contributing. So take a chance; stop being the long-time reader and participate. You get out of discussions what you put into them. Plus, you likely have a lot to share and offer, so add value and do not just seek to “get” something for yourself. Refer to the chapter on networking for reinforcement. Part of social networking is “networking,” so see it in this way. What value can you add to others?

Lead by Example

After you have experimented with technology tools for a bit, take a chance and lead a discussion, and become the professional whom others follow. Start your own blog, start

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T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

Tweeting, or do something to demonstrate that you know what you are talking about and know your profession.

Whenever this is suggested to most people, the first thing they say is that they do not feel like they have enough experience to lead, but a leader has to start somewhere. Most of you have more experience than you give yourself credit for. Leading is taking calculated, worthwhile risks. Take one. It is not nearly as scary as you have imagined it to be.

How and Why to Disconnect as a Leader

A colleague, Kevin Eickenberry, freely shared this valuable information with me on how and why we should consider disconnecting from technology when it makes sense.

As in many other areas of life, too much of a good thing is not necessarily so good. What problems does technology cause for leaders?

It starts with what we *assume*.

Because we have a smartphone (or smartphones) strapped to our belts or in our purses, we assume that we are always connected, ready to talk, and available to answer questions or make decisions.

The most dangerous assumption is that we need to be constantly connected, and if we are not, something terrible will happen. The sky will not fall because we missed a text.

As leaders, do we really need to be accessible and available to provide advice, wise counsel, and coaching to those we influence or lead? Of course, but only to a degree.

Do we need to be flexible in the ways and times we are available, and be open to different communication media to accommodate the situation and the other person? Yes, but only to a degree.

Does that mean we can never silence our phone or go a couple of hours away from e-mail? Not at all.

There are some jobs where you may need to be available nearly all of the time, such as a police officer or fireman or on call ER physician. But when was the last time you had to put out a true fire at work? Not everything in life is urgent. As much as you would like to believe your insight is indispensable, most things are not only not urgent, but they also will probably work out just fine without your input. (See the coaching chapter for questioning tips versus the “fixing the problem” mode of operation.)

Have you ever wished you could have some unconnected time to think, coach, focus, or perhaps get some important work done? Do you have a hard time untethering from your electronic devices?

You, as a leader, will become more effective, productive, and valued when you reevaluate your relationship to your electronic devices. How can you do that? How can you disconnect and actually lead better?

How to *Disconnect*

Set Expectations and Boundaries

This is the big one, and it cuts straight to the heart of the assumptions shared. If you are going to unplug and disconnect— be it for forty-five minutes, four hours, or four days— people need to know, especially if they are used to you always being on (you know who you are).

If you have been wired 24/7 and you suddenly disconnect without talking to people about expectations, you will understandably create confusion. Let people know when you will be accessible and when they can expect to hear back from you.

It may take time for you and others to adjust, but would you rather adjust or watch your smartphone and iPad become permanently affixed to your hand?

Manage Your “Interrupt-ability”

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

Have you ever gone into someone's office and had him or her turn off the phone or put the ringer on mute? Did you feel like your conversation was important to them? That is the point of managing "interrupt-ability." It could mean turning off the e-mail notification on your computer, putting your phone in silent mode, or any number of other things. Figure out yours and do them. People are not used to others doing this; it shows you care about them in the moment.

Schedule Time to Reply to E-mails

Have you ever been traveling for the day and then looked at your e-mail in-box after several hours? If you have, you likely found three things: (1) there were a lot of backlogged e-mails, (2) few if any messages required fast attention, and (3) responding in batches took less time. When you are constantly replying to e-mails, you are training people (setting unspoken expectations) that you are always answering them! If you choose to set time aside during the day (or even during the hour, if you must), you will be more productive *and* you will be taming the expectations that you are "always on."

Set Sacred Off-Line Times

Do you really have to be on the phone in the public restroom? Is your e-mail in-box really the last thing you need to check before bed and the first thing in the morning? The most important, busiest people in the world are not doing that, and you do not need to either.

Change the Medium

Pick up the phone. Walk to someone's office (see the booster on people skills). All of our technologies are mostly about communication. Not all of them are equally effective in every situation. Stem the e-mail flow with a quick call. Send a text instead of a call. Go synchronous when needed, and take it off-line when possible. Build a group list to send info to a larger number of people. Have a Facebook page to share info with a group so members can jump in and out to check, reply, add value, clarify, etc.

These methods will certainly improve your productivity, allowing you more focused time for the task at hand. But if you think of these as only time management suggestions,

you are missing an important point. They also allow you to be a more effective leader, showing your trust by engaging and encouraging people to operate without your input at a moment's notice.

If you feel you cannot change the culture in your organization in regard to these technologies, I urge you to reconsider. If things are not working perfectly, someone must raise the question, change the conversation, and adjust the behaviors. Seek solutions that help you use technology to your and your peoples' benefit.

Leadership Booster #7: Leveraging Technology

Case Study 1



The Kramerian Corporation’s CEO, Jack Kramer, had a very “hands-on” approach to leading his company to success. He had been at the helm of the company for nearly twenty years, and prided himself on how attached he was to all of his two hundred employees in thirty locations around the globe. Kramerian was the world’s leading manufacturer of aircraft pitot tubes (which measure the aircraft’s speed through the air) for supersonic fighter aircraft in all NATO countries. Their niche market was quite lucrative.

By hands-on, I mean Jack was used to responding to his e-mails anytime, anywhere. He took his smartphone to bed, and it rang many times each night, often waking him with problems others felt he needed to be aware of. He had a notebook computer and two smartphones, as well as wireless headsets in his car and his house, and on his boat.

Jack’s wife, Daphne, told him he needed to relax when he was not at work. She asked him why his other managers could not handle whatever came up. Jack discounted her insights until he had chest pains one night. Daphne rushed him to the hospital. He was assessed, and his doctor told him, “Jack, you need to reduce your stress. Your blood pressure is too high, and your blood work shows you need to exercise more. I see this every day.”

Jack told the doctor about his workload. He could tell the doctor did not really care about that excuse. “You need to disconnect more and have fun. Go for a walk. Find out what reduces your stress and add more of those activities. Find out what causes stress and eliminate or minimize those events.”

Jack filled out a very detailed stress management assessment, and it was clear what he needed to do.

What do you think, regarding work and based on the limited information here, would help Jack reduce his stress levels and stay alive to see sixty, and then seventy?

First thing the next morning, Jack called his key managers into his office and shared what had happened the night before and what the doctor had told him to do.

Jack said, “I need to make lifestyle changes, per my doctor and my wife, and me, so I have decided that I will have only one smartphone and only one computer, and that computer will be at my work office desk. I no longer will use my home computer for work. My home time is my time to disconnect from work. I will only do my e-mailing from seven thirty to eight thirty in the morning and again between four thirty and five thirty in the afternoon each weekday. No e-mails on the weekend. I expect each of you to take one night for emergency-only calls and make the best decision you can with whatever comes along. If it is a true urgent emergency, call me right away.”

Jack started taking walks in the early morning and in the evening. He lost weight and started yoga classes three times a week at his wife’s urging. They both loved it and looked forward to yoga date night, followed by a nearby salad bar they enjoyed.

Jack still used his technology, and it was vital to his company’s success, but he had to back off or risk serious health issues.

The company did even better the next year. Maybe Jack did not need to be in on every decision.

Hmm ...



Case Study 2

Julia was one of the more respected nurse managers at her hospital. She had risen through the ranks as a floor nurse, then a charge nurse, and now a nursing manager. She was earning her master's degree in nursing administration and had her sights set on a V.P. of nursing position.

Why was she so well respected? First, she empowered her employees to help make key decisions that impacted them. She was skilled at using technology tools. Not just the clinical updates and how to use electronic charting, which she was a whiz at, but she was also skilled in the use of other communication tools. In addition, her expertise, honed at various seminars, gave her the ability to mentor others.

Julia began a secure social networking site for her team and taught them how to use it and why it could be beneficial to them all. They used it to share ideas and insights across three shifts. They posted video clips to update each other on new techniques.

Julia set specific times to check and respond to e-mails. If a matter was urgent, they could call her, but it had to be urgent. For that, of course, she was always available, but other nurse managers could and did share this duty.

Julia ensured that speakers came in during lunch/dinner breaks to share new updates on procedures, or she had speakers video-taped or Skyped from other parts of the world. Her team loved that she tried new things with technology, even if it did not always work as well as they had hoped.



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Bill, a fifty-three-year-old director of plant operations, never used e-mail. He said, “I get more done when I am in their faces; plus, who can type when it is hitting the fan?” (He could not type—never learned and never wanted to.) Bill missed a lot by not using e-mail. His colleagues from around the company shared lessons learned on secure sites, but he did not see them. Therefore, he made (costly) mistakes that could have been avoided if he would have had the information.

Bill also did not carry a cell phone. “Those things are always going off, buzzing; it is annoying.”

His boss told him two things. “You *will* learn to type and use e-mail at least twice a day, and you will carry this smartphone and be available during your entire shift. I never know where you are, and often I need to reach you immediately but have to send a runner to find you.”

Bill, ticked off at that demand, which he felt was unreasonable and against his belief in how to supervise, said he would quit if his boss pressed him. His boss said he had a week to think about it. After some serious counseling by his wife, who pointed to their two kids in college and the weak economy, Bill decided to try it.

Bill worked hard and eventually had success learning and using these “newfangled” tools. Truth is, he sort of liked them, as they freed up time for him to focus on bigger items that needed his attention.

Leadership Booster Leveraging Technology Self-Assessment

Assess how well you use and do not use technology as a leader.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Leveraging Technology Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I am aware of what technology is available to help me be a more effective leader.					
2. I am familiar with the many uses of social networking sites and how they can help me be a more effective leader.					
3. I am comfortable with USA Today putting on its front page anything I put on the web.					
4. I participate in technology-related discussions and am comfortable at least trying new uses to see if and how they may help me lead better.					
5. With technology use, I lead by example (I show others that I am willing to learn and try what may work).					
6. I set appropriate expectations and boundaries with my technology use.					
7. I successfully manage my Interrupt-ability time.					
8. I schedule a set time to reply to e-mails and try to stick to that time for that purpose.					
9. I set sacred off-line times with technology.					
10. I am great at choosing the best medium (technology or phone or face-to-face) when determining the most appropriate way to lead.					

Leadership Booster Leveraging Technology Assessment by Others

Assess how well your leader uses technology to be more effective.

Leader name: _____

Check the appropriate response you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Leveraging Technology Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader is aware of what technology is available to help them be more effective.					
2. My leader is familiar with the many uses of social networking sites and how they can help them be more effective.					
3. My leader is comfortable with USA Today putting on its front page anything they put on the web.					
4. My leader participates in technology-related discussions and is comfortable in trying new uses to see if and how it may help them lead better.					
5. With technology use, my leader leads by example (showing others that they are willing to learn and try what may work).					
6. My leader sets appropriate expectations and boundaries with their technology use.					
7. My leader successfully manages their Interrupt-ability time.					
8. My leader schedules a set time to reply to e-mails and tries to stick to that time for that purpose.					
9. My leader sets sacred off-line times with technology, and we know when that is.					
10. My leader is great at choosing the best medium (technology or phone or face-to-face) when determining how best to lead.					

Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two leveraging technology strengths?

1.
2.

Based on these assessments, what are the top two areas related to leveraging technology this leader needs to improve?

1.
2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how they do it related to leveraging technology?
- B. Why that one?

A.
B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving how to leverage technology to lead (please type or print):



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Find a tech-smart person at work (or in your many networks) to teach you, coach you, and mentor you. Make sure it is someone who can meet your level of understanding, explanation-wise, and slowly share what is out there after you share your needs from a how-to-lead-better perspective.
2. Learn what is on social networking. Get a social networking guru to show you. Get a good book on the subject (perhaps a *For Dummies* book?). Try Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Dabble; see what is there and how it can help. It is there for you to experience and experiment with. Dip your toe, or dive headfirst, into the social medial pool and swim around.
3. Look at your website, your social media sites, and your e-mails once you have them or if you have them, and ensure that all the material is suitable for all eyes, age groups, and public-sharing purposes. Would your grandmother be ashamed or embarrassed to see what is there in word or picture? If the answer is maybe, get it off. Once something is on the Internet, it is nearly impossible to permanently remove it.
4. Tech talk. Find a technology person who can talk a “normal person’s” language on the subject, and schedule a meeting. Come with questions. Better yet, share the questions in advance, and come ready to learn. It is best to see it on the piece of equipment (smartphone, iPad, etc.) you will be using.
5. Always ask yourself, “How can this help me to be a more effective leader?” Perhaps it is a time-saving tip, or a way to get information to many people quickly, or a way to keep the personal touch but in a high-tech way. If you do not see the leadership application after thinking about it, and those in your Twitter or Facebook world do not either, move on. Not everything is going to fit what you need.
6. Set specific times when you will be using your technology to communicate, and stick to it. This may be hard, but you must do it. Ensure that all your people know when

those times are and that you are going to stick to this schedule. They will admire you for being able to do it.

7. Make it known that your downtime from work is time when you are keeping the focus away from work issues. You only can be interrupted mainly during work hours. Your time away from work is yours, and you need it so you can come back to work refreshed, reenergized, and ready to do all you can to help others be successful.
8. Have a set time to read and reply to e-mails. Determine their category (delete, reply now, or keep and reply later) as you are reading them. For replies, is it best to do so via e-mail, face-to-face, on the phone, or by other means (Skype, video, etc.)?
9. Ensure that you are only interrupted when it is vital. Everything in life and at work is not urgent. Is it important but not urgent? That is good to know for your whole team. Fight the need to respond to everything now. If a new item comes in, some feel the need to stop one urgent item and make the new item the new urgent. Rarely does anything get completed, and the *truly* urgent items remain undone.
10. *High Tech High Touch* (2001) is the title of a great book by John Naisbitt which focuses on thriving and growing and learning in a high-tech world. But are we losing our “high touch,” or interpersonal, skills in the process? Are our people skills eroding? How many of you have people on your team who, when faced with a people issue, will plead, “Can I just send an e-mail versus going to see them?” Why is that? Because their formative years pushed them to a place where it is/was much safer to fire off an e-mail than look into someone’s eyes.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #7: Leveraging Technology

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 8

Leadership Skill Booster #8: Communicating Effectively

The art of communication is the language of leadership.

—James Humes, presidential speechwriter

Communication is one of the *most* important and *most* misunderstood concepts leaders need. Speaking, writing, listening, and nonverbals—without those skills honed, one cannot effectively lead others. Yet so few do them well, much less excel at them.

So let us dive into why it is so important to understand how to communicate, and then share guidance on how you can improve in areas you need to work on to achieve superb communication skills.

Most leadership surveys, research, tips, and books have a substantial amount of words devoted to communication. Just the word *communication* makes anyone who has ever worked in an organization start to nod. Of course effective communication skills and

abilities are important. But what are they, and how do we do them well? *That* is the million-dollar question if we really knew how much time, attention, energy, and money were tied to communication effectiveness. Let us ask ourselves these vital questions which related to communication with technology:

1. Do we need to be as tied in as we are?
2. Why?
3. Is everything we do using our tools urgent *and* important? Can things wait?
4. What would our lives, at work and away from work, look like with a weeklong communication technology moratorium (i.e., time away from technology)? Would your world *really* come to an end?

Let us take some time to assess how we are doing in these main areas of communication as they relate to being a more effective leader. Self-assessments and assessments by others can help provide self-talk and feedback on how we are doing in these areas. We will see some examples of this playing out in workplace settings with workplace issues. Finally, this booster will leave you with specific tools, tips, and techniques to incorporate into your own leadership practice.

Nonverbal Communication

Perhaps the most important communication competency is understanding how important nonverbal communication skills are. Nonverbal means those ways we communicate without words: gestures, facial expressions, body language, and the like. Most communication is nonverbal (experts differ on the exact percentage). Lack of these, or lack of awareness of how these are perceived by others, sends strong signals.

We have to be aware of the situation and context, the person or persons we are communicating with, and how they best respond to a sent message. At the core of effective communication is *knowing the person* and putting the message you wish to send into a format that best fits the purpose. This means we have to build relationships and trust to the point that the other person allows you to know him or her well enough to find out how he or she communicates (ask and/or observe the person over time to best be able to do this). Some people we work with, or lead, prefer e-mail communication, or

texting, or the phone, or face-to-face. This is how they communicate best. Know what forum works best for each person you work with and consider that, when and where possible, if you can when communicating.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communications can be one-on-one, one with a group/team, or one with the organization. A performance feedback session with a problem employee would likely be done in a one-on-one session. A staff meeting with your team would fit the one-with-team setting. Though communications would float around the team, you are talking, gesturing, writing, speaking, listening, and observing (do not forget the key communication skill of observing). A one-with-the-organization setting would be giving a public address or presentation to a large group.

Listening

Listening is a vital communication skill. We observe and learn best by listening to others. It is tough to listen when our mouths are running or our hands are typing. People usually love to talk, so let them. We learn a lot by listening, observing, processing what we hear, clarifying with questions, and acknowledging with nonverbal and verbal responses.

A gifted trainer and consultant friend of mine, Fran Kick, says it best: “Pay attention, and respond appropriately. You get out of this what you put into it” (www.kickitin.com).

An example of poor listening can be viewed on many news and sports talk programs. Most have a panel of “experts” who inevitably all talk at once. It comes down to who is the loudest, most obnoxious, and most tenacious in getting their words out. Of course, they all have ideas, but they forgot how to listen.

Questioning

Asking appropriate questions with your requisite questioning skills is vital as highlighted in the booster on coaching (see Leadership Booster #6). If you have a handful of good

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questions that fit most situations, you will be head and shoulders above most other leaders. Here are some examples to help guide you:

1. What do you love about working here?
2. What can I do to make your job more satisfying?
3. What excites you about your career and future potential?

Many people do not have the skills of asking great questions, therefore, they do not do this well. This skill needs to be learned, practiced, improved, and practiced some more.

Feedback

One of the best ways to help others is to give them feedback. This needs to be timely, specific, appropriate, tailored, and constructive, and it can and should be combined with other communications skills, including observing, listening, questioning, and caring. I am not referring to the often dreaded annual performance evaluation. It is usually dreaded because so few do this well and the performers have been given little or no ongoing feedback. This may be the one and only time in a year that a performer/employee gets to know how he or she is doing as perceived by the boss. That is almost criminal. Why do people not give more feedback? *They do not know how.*

Persuasion

A communications competency that does not tend to get much attention in books and training courses is being persuasive. This is not about selling ideas, products, or services. Through listening, questioning, observing, and experiencing, you learn how to be more persuasive with other people. Combined with improved assertiveness, this can provide much more productive and helpful working relationships and outcomes for you and those you lead.

Self-Talk

Another communication skill area we tend to overlook is self-talk. We need to consider this more because it is always going. We reflect, interpret, replay, connect, make sense,

get emotional, and get inspired by what we tell ourselves. We need to know how to use self-talk to the best of our abilities to help our people, our organizations, our societies, and us. Sometimes, that self-talk can talk us into a sad or bad mood. Conversely, we can sometimes use self-talk to improve our moods quite a bit.

Technology and Communications

The final concept for being a more effective leader through better communication is technology. Go into any mall and you will see how reliant we are on communication tools. We can use these tools to keep up, respond more quickly, be accessible, handle emergencies, meet friends, etc. We can also become so reliant and responsive that we never relax and recharge our internal batteries. We have not “stepped off the dance floor and up onto the balcony,” as Martin Linskey and Ronald Heifetz point out in *Leadership on the Line*, to see what is really happening in the technology and communication arena. As stated earlier in this chapter and book, yet it bears repeating, we need to ask ourselves these vital questions:

1. Do we need to be as tied in as we are?
2. Why?
3. Is everything we do using our tools urgent *and* important? Can things wait?
4. What would our lives, at work and away from work, look like with a weeklong communication technology moratorium? Would your world *really* come to an end?

Leadership Skill Booster #8 Communicating Effectively

Case Study 1



John worked for the Transportation Security Administration in a regional office of a large US city. He was not the titled boss or manager, but he was one of the informal leaders. He came from the corporate sector where he was successful, but when the TSA formed, he felt a higher calling, applied, and was hired to work in information security.

John was likable. His peers noticed this. His boss noticed this. His direct reports noticed this. But what, specifically, did he do and say that made people warm up to him, trust him, and work hard to make him look and be successful?

He was a gifted communicator.

Now I do not mean he gave inspiring speeches like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (e.g., “I Have a Dream”). No, he was first and foremost a caring listener. Here is an actual transcript of an interaction between John and his immediate supervisor, Seth.

John: “How are you doing today, Seth?”

Seth: “I have had better days.”

John: “Is it something you can or want to talk to me about?”

Seth hesitated so John motioned for them to step into the conference room.

Seth: “I feel I work hard here. I come in early, do what my boss wants me to do as best I can. I know I ask people to do a lot, but I am asked to do a lot. Well, Mr. Williams [his boss] just met with me and said I need to ‘get more outta [my] people ... push ‘em harder, they will step up.’”

John: “Seth, I think you are doing a great job. Do you mind if I offer some advice?”

Seth: “I will take any help I can get. I am not sure how much harder I can push folks.”

John: “I have two thoughts. One, I think you need to ask Mr. Williams to provide more specifics, give you clear examples of expectations, and do not leave until you get them. It is tough to hit a target if you do not know where to aim. Secondly, after that, I think you call us all together and share these expectations with us. Let us *all* be part of the solution. Do not feel the need to shoulder this load all alone. If there is one thing I have learned over the years by working with many very effective leaders and a few ineffective ones—by the way, you are in the former category—is that those who let the team in on the goals of the team, and let the team help find solutions, sometimes creative, are the most impactful and, quite frankly, most respected.”

Seth sat and thought. He felt a calm come over him. He *had* been carrying the heaviness of the team’s charges by upper management. He felt if he kept the hard work off of them, they could focus. But he also felt like he was working ineffectively, and working long hours.

Seth: “Thank you. I like that advice. I will make an appointment with Mr. Williams’s assistant to get in to see him right away. Then I will ask the team to get together with me during our weekly staff meeting to *only* talk about what I learn.”

John: “We are here, as a team, and we will work with you, as your team, to do all we can to all be successful. We like you, and we want you to be successful.”

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

Seth did meet with Mr. Williams. At first he continued to speak in generalities and nonspecifics. But when Seth pressed him to give him his top three priorities for the team in the next three months, he did. Seth took copious notes, went back to his office, and wrote up his notes. Then he sent an e-mail to Mr. Williams, thanking him for the prioritization of needs and providing a list of those prioritizations. Seth asked him to confirm that these notes were accurate (to have it on record, as he sometimes forgot what he said from meeting to meeting). He confirmed.

Seth then e-mailed the team to share the three priorities and asked them to attend the staff meeting on Friday with their ideas so the team could develop workable, shared solutions and develop a project plan for each priority.

On Friday, the amazing teamwork began, and the team not only stepped up to the challenge but also exceeded the expectations of the challenges, ahead of schedule and below budget. Seth was thrilled and less stressed, and the team felt empowered. Mr. Williams did not have any more conversations with Seth to push his team. They pushed each other.



Case Study 2

Anna has worked in her office for about three years. She is married to a military officer, so they move around a lot. But her boss, Kimberly (Kim), is the most influential person in her life aside from her parents and husband. Kim took the time to get to know Anna and Anna's family and truly cares. What impresses Anna the most is how great Kim is at communicating with others. Here are just a few examples of what Kim does:

1. She meets with each of her direct reports (she has thirty to thirty-five at any one time) one-on-one. She does this twice a year to find out how they are doing and what Kim can do to support them.
2. Kim sends out a weekly electronic update. In this she shares her ideas, updates on things her team wants to know about, and then she asks people to send her questions, ideas, or thoughts; stop in to see her; or talk to her as she walks through the office. She wants to know how things are going, and wants to support them however she can.
3. Kim holds a monthly town hall meeting in the auditorium, occasionally complete with food, lively music, and beach balls to volley. This lasts only an hour, and Kim brings in various people in the organization to provide short (no more than ten minutes) overviews of some hot topics at work, and then she opens it up for questions on any topic. The CEO and COO usually are in the room to respond if Kim needs their insights. The CEO told Kim he always learns more than she shares at these meetings.

T. Scott Graham, Ph.D.

4. Kim walks the hall, and listens, questions, learns, and cares. She is rarely in her office, but everyone has her cell phone number so they can text or call her anytime. Kim does not check her phone messages or texts or her e-mails after seven o'clock at night or before six o'clock the next morning. That is her dedicated family time and a time to recharge so she can give her team her full attention when she is at work. She encourages others to do the same.

So now you have a glimpse of why Anna is so impressed, inspired, and influenced by Kim. Though Anna will move soon with her husband and their family to who knows where, Kim will “go with her” wherever she goes. Anna is a better person and a better employee, and she will be a much better leader for having her three years of mentorship with Kim.

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Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Tammy arrived in the new office. It was mostly men but a few women. That was her first observation. The second observation was that no one was talking to anyone. They were typing on computers, talking on cell phones, or texting on smartphones. She went up to a man who was doing none of that and said, “Hi, I am Tammy, and this is my first day here.” He never looked up but stopped reading a report and pointed down the hall. “Am I supposed to check in with someone?” she asked. He pointed more emphatically but said nothing, nor did he look at her.

She walked on. Tammy went down a few cubicles and stopped in front of a woman who was talking on the phone. It was obviously a personal call, as she was laughing and swearing. Tammy got her attention long enough for the young lady to cup her hand over the mouthpiece and say, “Do you see me on the phone? I am busy.” And she kept talking.

Tammy moved on. She went down the hall a bit more and stopped to see Mr. Smith. “Mr. Smith, I am Tammy Owens, the new sales manager for district ten,” she said. Mr. Smith was typing on his cell phone and said, “I am busy. Come back later.” He never looked up, and he never welcomed her.

Tammy, who was actually the new and “undercover” CEO of the company (and not the new sales manager) had heard from her predecessor that this place needed some changes if it was to be competitive in a very competitive business. Now she saw why.

Leadership Booster Communicating Effectively Self-Assessment

Rate yourself on your communication skills as you use them in typical environments.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Communication Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I am a skilled user of nonverbal communication (e.g., body language, facial expressions, gestures, body movement) to better lead others.					
2. I use one-on-one time effectively (i.e., frequently enough to provide value to others).					
3. I use my time and skills with my groups/teams very well (evidenced by the fact that they learn a lot from how I do this).					
4. I am a skilled communicator when I am in a large group setting: speaking, use of support material, picking the right forum to share, and getting positive feedback from those I lead and communicate with.					
5. I am a great listener.					
6. I am skilled at asking questions. I ask great questions that help others by getting to the core of what people wish to share.					
7. The feedback I provide is appropriate, timely, and frequent enough, and is always shared in a constructive and caring way.					
8. I am skilled at being persuasive with others in a way that works for them.					
9. I really listen to the self-talk in my head and share what I hear with others.					
10. I am good at knowing and applying the right technology to help with communication. I know when to use and not use it.					

Leadership Booster Communicating Effectively Assessment by Others

Rate your leader on communication skills as he/she uses them in typical environments.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Communication Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader is a skilled user of nonverbal communication (e.g., body language, facial expressions, gestures, body movement) to be better at leading us.					
2. My leader uses one-on-one time effectively (i.e., frequently enough to provide value to us).					
3. My leader uses their time and skills with their groups/teams very well (evidenced by the fact that we learn a lot from how they do this).					
4. My leader is a skilled communicator when they are in a large group setting: speaking, using support material, picking the right forum to share, and getting positive feedback from those being led and communicated with.					
5. My leader is a great listener.					
6. My leader is skilled at asking questions. They ask great questions that help us get to the core of what we wish to share.					
7. The feedback my leader provides is appropriate, timely, and frequent enough, and is always shared in a constructive and caring way.					
8. My leader is skilled at being persuasive with others in a way that works for us.					
9. I believe my leader must really listen to the self-talk in their head because my leader shares with us what they think about.					
10. My leader is good at knowing and applying the right technology to help with communication. They know when to use and not use it.					

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Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two communication strengths?

1. 2.

Based on these assessments, what are the top two areas related to communications this leader needs to improve?

1. 2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it related to communication?
- B. Why that one?

A. B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving communication (please type or print):

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Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

Top Ten Communication Areas for Leaders Nonverbal Communication

- Pay attention to clues like eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, body movements, and tone of voice (beyond the words).
- Match words with nonverbal cues; e.g., they say they are happy, but frown, kick the ground, and glare at you.
- Listen to your tone of voice. Do you sound enthusiastic, uninterested, upset, or afraid?
- Make eye contact. Too little and you may be evading or hiding something. Too much and it may intimidate and seem confrontational. Aim for about four seconds when in a conversation.
- Ask questions of clarification if nonverbals send mixed or confusing signals. You may say, “Is what you are saying ...?”
- Use nonverbal signals and gestures in concert with verbals to match.
- Group the nonverbals. One confusing nonverbal may not mean anything. A group of them aligned may mean a great deal. Look for groupings in alignment to tell a story.
- Consider the context; is it formal or informal?
- Try not to misread signals. Do not assume, for example, a weak handshake means disinterest or no fortitude. It could simply mean the person has a muscular problem.
- Observe and practice. Watch who aligns verbal and nonverbal communication and is extremely effective at it. Take mental notes of what they do and how they do it. Then practice emulating that behavior ... and practice it a lot.

One-on-Ones

- Choose words you believe the receiver will understand.
- Be courteous. Take turns. Do not interrupt.
- Be well read so you can speak on a number of topics and be in on conversations around a host of interests.
- Be enthusiastic as a speaker and as a listener. If you are flat and dull, people will drift off or “log out.”
- Be aware of your words, the tone of your voice, and your nonverbals in this one-on-one environment, too.

One-on-Team

- Inspire others with a clear vision, or ideas, to get behind. Know their passions and yours, and be able to merge the two with inspiring words. Listen. Your employees need to see how they fit into this vision and the role they have. They need a picture of what this will look and feel like.
- Surround yourself with engaged, focused people. You want good listeners to work with.
- Teach others how to see what you see for the team. If they see the meaning and purpose, they will catch the momentum and push the team along.
- Be aware of the signals you are sending. Ask those who know you best to tell you what signals you send to others. Be open to changing them if they are the wrong messages.

One-on-Organization

(Giving a public address or presentation to a large group)

- Breathe to relax. It is okay to pause.
- Make an outline and print it larger than usual. If on a stage, you can have note posters flat on the ground, where only you see them, to keep your thoughts flowing.
- Be confident. You are the expert; act like it. Own what you know (probably better than anyone else there).

- Make eye contact by slowly scanning the audience and looking for particular people, then look into their eyes.
- Practice in advance. Let others in a small group hear it and watch it and provide specific, helpful feedback on what would make it better (assessing the words and nonverbals).
- Take questions at the end.
- Do not worry too much on timing.
- Be aware of your nervous habits, such as “um”/”uh,” flipping a pencil, jingling change in your pocket, or twiddling your thumbs.
- If you hear yourself say “um” or “uh,” slow down, take a breath, and then speak.
- Bring a bottle of cool water for cotton mouth.

Observing and Listening

- Stop talking. If you are talking, you are not listening. This is true with self-talk, too.
- Make space for listening, physical and mental space. Make room for focused listening, and let the noise die down so you can stay in that space.
- Pause for reacting. Take time to let what you hear sink in. Notice reactions, verbal and nonverbal.
- Do not judge people. Wait. Cut them some slack. Give them an opportunity.
- Focus by making eye contact, nodding affirmatively, leaning toward them, or encouraging them to go on. Do not interrupt or be a sentence finisher, ask open questions, or summarize.
- Visualize what they are saying to you.
- Remember names. Repeat them, such as “Hi, Janet, nice to meet you.” Fold their names into the conversation. Associate them with something or someone you can visualize in order to recall names later.
- Use questions to show you are in the moment.
- Be in the moment. Force yourself to let go of competing thoughts.
- Look at the person you are talking to.
- Tune out extraneous noise.
- Repeat back key learning to ensure you heard it correctly.

Asking Questions

- Facts are instantly available on a smartphone, but questions require more thought and reflection.
- Challenge your own beliefs and assumptions. Open your mind to your subject's complexity. Before registering your opinion, allow your mind to slip into a state of not knowing. You let others feel ownership of decisions through questioning.
- "Whose decision is this?" If it is yours, ask questions of others to arrive at the best answer you can in the time you have. If it is someone else's decision, ask questions to help him or her. Help the decision-maker gain ownership, which creates engagement, drive, and efficiency.
- If you do not trust others to make good decisions, mentor them so they learn how to do so. They will either rise to the challenge or not. If not, it may be time for training or to allow them to seek their success elsewhere.
- It is easy to just give solutions, right or wrong. It is hard to ask questions, especially if you *think* you know the answers. But if you are open to the possibility that there might be better options in other people's heads, you will become even more effective.
- If people keep coming to you for answers, that is a red flag that you need to keep coming back at them even harder with challenging, open-ended questions.

Giving Feedback

- Make it about work performance (positive or negative).
- Communicate directly to that person; do not share with others and then tell that person later.
- Do it within twenty-four hours of the event.
- Choose a private place.
- Be balanced with positive feedback, too. Not *all* feedback is or should be negative/corrective. Reread that statement.
- Show respect.
- Accept some of the responsibility as it makes it easier for the person to accept it.
- Be specific.
- Explain why this is a problem (if it is).

- Ask and listen.
- Be open and empathetic.
- Agree with what is going on. Solve the problem together. Get buy-in from the person on a workable, helpful solution.
- Be quiet. Let them talk. Ask for feedback.
- Share your own personal stories if and when they relate.
- Offer support.
- Be persistent. Agree to a date to review progress, and keep that date firm.
- Help others to learn how to give feedback to their peers. Coach this skill into them so not everyone feels the need to come to you.

Feedback Formula for Success:

Balanced start: “I like the way you ...”

Explain what: “I’ve noticed when you ... that ...” Explain why: “I feel ...” or “It is a problem because ...”

Be specific: “Your handling of Customer X this morning, especially the way you soothed his nerves when he was irate, was perfect.”

Check their view: “What do you think? Am I being reasonable?”

Work out change: “What solutions can we come up with together? What solutions have you thought of? How can we solve this? In the future, would you please ...?”

Agree: “So we agree that ... right?”

Ask for feedback: “Is there anything you think I should be doing differently?”

Follow up: Make an appointment to meet again.

Persuasion

Being persuasive and influential is a key skill for leaders. To get the support and cooperation of others to help leaders reach their own goals and organizational goals is vital. Leaders need people.

- Enter their world; pretend you are them. What are they thinking? What would I do if I were them? What would my thoughts, feelings, and opinions be?

- Mirror their body language; observe how they act, speak, and think. Act like them. Mirror their speech clarity and pace. Be careful not to come across as mocking. Be subtle and choosy about what you mimic.
- Be optimistic, cheerful, and nice. People gravitate to and like others who make their day brighter and lighter.
- Be sincere and trustworthy. Over deliver on expectations. Make them feel you are the go-to person when something needs to be done right. Be sincere with your compliments.
- Show evidence that your ideas are compelling and perhaps most effective. Use testimonials, focus group results, before-and-after scenarios, and/or comparison data.
- Give them the WIIFT? (What is in it for them?) answers. What do they want? What do you provide that satisfies that?
- Care about them. Focus on *their* interests, desires, needs, and expectations. This builds trust.

Self-Talk

- Usually the patterns start in childhood.
- Notice your patterns as they happen in your head (positive and negative self-talk).
- Keep a journal; this helps you understand what you are hearing in your mind. Do this as you go or at day's end.
- Say "Stop!" aloud or loudly in your mind when negative thoughts take over.
- Put a rubber band on your wrist. When you have a negative self-talk, snap the band on your arm to get a negative feedback sting.
- Replace negative thoughts with positives, or use milder wording.
- Change "I hate" to "I really dislike" and "I am so mad" to "I am a bit upset." Make it milder and less over the top.
- Turn negatives (like a flight cancellation) into nonfactors or positives ("I can catch up on work, e-mails, calling friends ...").
- Turn self-limiting statements into positive questions: from "I cannot do this" to "How can I find a way to do this?"

Technology and Communication

- Focus on how and what technology does to enhance the value you bring to the workplace. If you ask yourself at the end of each work period “What did I accomplish today and did I earn my pay?” and you feel good about your answer, that is good. If you only can point to things that ate up time but did not get real results or positive outcomes, that is a red flag.
- Turn the technology off when you can. Most of us can; we simply do not. Develop empathy with face-to-face interactions. Some suggest this skill is eroding.
- Relationships are not forged on a deep level in an all-text world. If all I know about you comes from texting, and I know another person on a deeper, interpersonal level, who do you think will come to mind when I need someone or want to recommend someone for an opportunity?
- Do not use Facebook at work unless you need it for work (e.g., human resources personnel may use it to help screen potential job applicants). Do not check your personal e-mail at work.
- When at work, turn off communication devices unless you have to have them to work. Keep them off.
- It is not enough to understand technology, its impact, and its connection to communication for leadership development. Knowledge is partial power. Taking action is what really matters once you understand it.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #8 Communicating Effectively

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 9

Leadership Skills Booster #9: Generational Cooperation

Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.

—George Orwell British author

We live in unusual times for many reasons. But, the reason for this leadership skills booster is the fact that in many of today's workplaces, we have up to four generations working together. Even if your organization is small, you may have two generations working side by side. Maybe you are an entrepreneur working alone, but your customers, clients, patients, vendors, networks, buyers, suppliers may have multiple generations of workers with whom you interact. Even if you only work within, and with, your own generation, it may prove helpful to know more about what makes them tick.

If you take nothing else from this, take this fact: While there are some generalized tendencies and assumptions of each unique generation, each group is made up of

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individuals. And it is at the individual level where leadership happens. So you must know the individual and not assume “they” all act and are alike because of their age. Get to know people as individuals.

Having said that, some unique shared events have molded groups of individuals and make up part of who they are.

Why should you care about this often-hidden aspect of diversity in the workplace? Because diversity involves understanding, appreciating and relating effectively with people who are different from you. Generational differences are based on variations in values and guiding beliefs, which in turn are based on environmental and social factors. During their formative years, individuals in these age groups shared similar experiences as a result of the social and environmental factors. Different generations tend to have some similar traits that transfer to their large group and make an impact in the workplace.

Generational labeling of groups can help us understand the individuals’ views and ideas, but any labeling can be bad. Stereotyping ensues, and there is a rush to make broad changes based on the stereotype, while at the individual level, it makes no sense to do so. It is not like some gigantic generational clock strikes twelve and a new generation starts. The names and years of generations vary. It is helpful to understand the frame of reference for varying age groups because it helps us understand general feelings that may underlie certain beliefs and actions. Managing generational diversity is only partly about knowledge; it is mostly about communication.

Pick up any generational book (and there are many good ones, including *When Generations Collide* and *Generations at Work*), and you will get a great overview of each generation, the years typically encompassed, and the special shared experiences and values. For this discussion, we look at the more common names and fairly common shared traits or experiences (Zemke 1999).

The Generations at Work*

NAME OF GENERATIONAL COHORT	BIRTH YEARS	GROUP FEATURES/TRAITs
Silents or Veterans	Mid 1920s to early 1940s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable • Thorough • Loyal • Work hard • Not great with change • Uncomfortable with conflict • Reluctant to go against “the system”
Baby Boomers or Boomers	Early 1940s to early 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven to excel • Good team players • Relationship builders • Want to make others happy • Uncomfortable with conflict • Judgmental of those who differ
Generation Xers or Gen-X	Early 1960s to early 1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable • Tech-literate • Independent • Unintimidated by authority • Impatient • Poor people skills • Cynical

Millennials or Gen-Y	Early 1980s to early 2000s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimistic• Tenacious• Multitaskers• Tech-savvy• Need supervision and structure• Inexperienced with handling difficult “people issues”
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*Some experts differ on the exact years of each generation, but these are widely accepted.

By examining these generalized, commonly shared traits (remember to focus on the individual, not the cohort), one can see the diversity. Perhaps you thought of yourself, those you work with, or just people you know when you checked off which traits were true. It may prove valuable to share some research by the Center for Creative Leadership (www.ccl.org). The researchers at the Center studied the concept of generational diversity for seven years and came up with ten general truths about leading across the generations. Sometimes with a subject like diversity, we focus on differences. I think we should stay positive and focus on *shared truths* and *bridges*.

CCL's Ten General Truths (2009)

- Truth #1: All generations have similar values. Many people think there are enormous differences in values between older and younger people. However, CCL's research has proven that different generations actually have fairly similar values. “Family” is the value chosen most frequently by people of all generations. Other shared values include integrity, achievement, love, competence, happiness, self-respect, wisdom, balance, and responsibility.
- Truth #2: Everyone wants respect. We often hear that younger people are disrespectful to older employees and people in authority. We also hear complaints that older people show no respect for younger talent and ideas. The reality is that everyone wants respect; they just do not define it the same way.

- Truth #3: Trust matters. People of all generations and at all levels trust the people they work with directly, such as bosses, peers, and direct reports, more than they trust their organizations. And people trust their organization more than they trust upper management.
- Truth #4: Everyone wants credible, trustworthy leaders. What do different generations expect from their leaders? People of all generations want their leaders to be credible, to be trusted, to listen well, to be farsighted, and to be encouraging.
- Truth #5: Office politics is an issue, no matter what your age. Everyone is concerned about the effects of organizational politics on their careers. We all want to be recognized for the work we do and to have access to the resources we need. Employees know that political skills are a critical component in being able to move up and be effective at higher levels of management.
- Truth #6: No one really likes change. The stereotype is that older people hate change and younger generations thrive off of it, but these are inaccurate assumptions. In general, people from all generations are uncomfortable with change. Resistance to change has nothing to do with age; it is all about how much one has to gain or lose with the change.
- Truth #7: Loyalty depends on the context, not on the generation. The study shows that younger generations are no more likely to job-hop than older generations were at the same age. The perception that older people are more loyal is, in fact, associated with context, not age. For example, people who are closer to retirement are more likely to want to stay with the same organization for the rest of their working life, and people higher in an organization work more hours than do people lower in the organization.
- Truth #8: It is as easy to retain a young person as it is to retain an older one if you do the right things. Just about everyone feels overworked and underpaid. People of all generations have the same ideas about what their organization can do to retain them. Employees want room to advance, respect and recognition, a better quality of life, and fair compensation.
- Truth #9: Everyone wants to learn, more than just about anything else. Learning and development were among the issues most frequently mentioned by study participants of all the generations surveyed. Everyone wants to make sure they have the training necessary to do their current job well. They are also interested in what they need to be learning to get to the next level in their organization.

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- Truth #10: Almost everyone wants a coach. We have heard that younger people are constantly asking for feedback and cannot get enough of it. We have also heard that older people do not want any feedback at all. According to our research, everyone wants to know how he or she is doing and wants to learn how to do better. Feedback can come in many forms, and people of all generations seem to like to receive it.

(Source: <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/podcast/transcript10principlesGenerations.aspx>)

Please, right now, take ten more minutes to reread and think about the Ten General Truths. They are *that* important.

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Leadership Booster #9: Generational Cooperation

Case Study 1



Stacy fell right smack dab in the middle of Gen X. She was born 1974 and exhibited many of the traits of Gen Xers. She worked well under pressure, had sharp technical skills, could work alone without much supervision, and would speak out if things did not make any sense, regardless of the level of executive who was within earshot. She had a rather rough edge (her language could border on offensive to some, but she said she was passionate about what her company does) that surfaced now and then when she thought her people needed “a swift kick in the drawers.” Her methods got results.

Her boss, Albert, is nearly seventy (a manager who was part of the Silent Generation) and had never even hinted at retirement. He, too, had a few traits of his generation. He was very hardworking, had no clue about technology (he owned a flip phone and rarely used e-mail), and just did not get the young kids who worked there. “They seem to be all over the map in their focus. In my day, we took a job and finished a job. Then we moved on. It worked then; it still works. They just do not get it.”

Stacy and Albert had many conflicts and values-based battles.

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Chuck, the organizational development specialist, noticed this riff. He asked if he could meet with them, just to chat to get their input on a few things. At that meeting, Chuck shared some of their actual interactions, which he had observed over the last two weeks: what they said, what the issues were, how these interactions ended, etc. He shared four specific incidents from the previous three days.

Chuck asked them to share why each of these interactions had bothered them so much. They shared their deepest feelings after Chuck asked some well-placed, clarifying, coaching questions. Stacy and Albert came away with a bit more understanding of why each of them liked the information the way they liked it. Also, their working styles differed greatly, but each was able to get their work accomplished. This open dialogue that Chuck started was helpful, they said. They also said they wanted to meet with Chuck weekly for the next few weeks. They agreed to meet on Fridays, which was the slowest day at work.

After about four weekly sessions, Stacy and Albert were slowly becoming friends, not because of the meetings, but because they were finally communicating and not simply complaining that the other person “did not get it.” They just did not fully understand the hot buttons that brought stress, the important parts of each other’s work, and why each wanted and needed things the way they did. Each agreed to work hard to try to understand one another and then be flexible enough to adjust, adapt, and even adopt new ways to help the team, not just to get their way.



Case Study 2

Larry had workers across several generations. At least once a quarter, he made it a point to bring in local experts on various topics to share insights, lessons learned, relevant research, and helpful suggestions with them. At least once a year, he had an engaging, entertaining, relevant, heartfelt, and knowledgeable speaker address generational diversity issues. This speaker responded to questions, ensured they understood the cautions of stereotyping, and stressed the importance of communications.

Larry also had a Generations Tiger Team, as he called it, of cross-generational workers whose sole purpose was to gauge and ask the organizational members what worked, what was “behind the times,” and what would work better as it related to attracting and retaining talent across the age spectrum. The team provided Larry with input once a month at a special meeting. Decisions were made on the spot, and changes were put in place and shared across the organization via web, e-mail, town hall meetings, and one-on-one meetings with Larry.



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

Harry hated his job. He was sixty-six (Baby Boomer/Silent Generation age range) and worked with a bunch of “kids.” Harry said when the old-timers left with early retirement the previous year, they hired a bunch of “snotty-nosed kids to run the place.” They were always plugged into music, rollerblading in the halls, and bringing their dogs to lunch. They even had a chef and a kickball team. It was all too much for Harry. He did everything he could to fight the changes, the hirings, and the atmosphere.

The new CEO (a Gen Xer and son of the former CEO) thought the changes were sorely needed. There were no warnings of the impending hirings or these drastic changes, so many who had been there a long time were ill-prepared. Many quit, not because they could not change but because they could not change that fast. Others simply shut down and hoped to ride this wave out until it changed again and went back to business as usual. (See the book *Who Moved My Cheese?* (1995) by Spencer Johnson for an analogy.)

The company lost a lot of seasoned veterans and wise corporate memory with the mass exodus. It is too bad because if this had been transitioned right and well, much could have been gained. But it was not, and they did not.

Leadership Booster Generational Cooperation Self-Assessment

Assess your leadership as it relates to working across and with the generations at work.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Generational Cooperation Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I have knowledge of the different generational cohorts at work.					
2. I treat each individual as unique and special, not lumped into a large group that I generalize about.					
3. I make it a point to engage in more effective conversations among employees, customers, and stakeholders.					
4. I make it a point to examine policies as they apply to all members of each generational cohort.					
5. I am flexible and determined to understand others through ongoing research and conversations with the people involved.					
6. I am open-minded and appropriately critical/evaluative of the value of technology (social media, etc.) to the workplace and workers.					
7. On issues relevant to all generations, I make it a point to have generational representatives at the table to provide input.					
8. I seek first to understand the individual versus painting people into broad-brush groups based on their generational cohort.					
9. I do not pigeonhole solutions based on the generational cohort traits that are prevalent in the literature.					
10. I am good at challenging my, and others', assumptions about generations.					

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Leadership Booster Generational Cooperation Assessment by Others

Assess your leader's ability to work across and with the generations in the workplace.

Leader name: _____

Check the appropriate response you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Generational Cooperation Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader has knowledge of the different generational cohorts at work.					
2. My leader treats each individual as unique and special, not lumped into a large group that is generalized about.					
3. My leader makes it a point to engage in more effective conversations among employees, customers, and stakeholders.					
4. My leader makes it a point to examine policies as they apply to all members of each generational cohort.					
5. My leader is flexible and determined to understand others through ongoing research and conversations with the people involved.					
6. My leader is open-minded and appropriately critical/ evaluative of the value of technology (social media, etc.) to the workplace and workers.					
7. On issues relevant to all generations, my leader makes it a point to have generational representatives at the table to provide input.					
8. My leader seeks first to understand the individual versus painting people into broad-brush groups based on their generational cohort.					
9. My leader does not pigeonhole solutions based on the generational cohort traits that are prevalent in the literature.					
10. My leader is good at challenging their and others' assumptions about generations.					

Based on these assessments, what are this leader's top two generational cooperation strengths?

1.
2.

Based on these assessments, what are the top two areas related to generational cooperation this leader needs to improve?

1.
2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how he/she does it related to leading across the generations?
B. Why that one?

A.
B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to improving generational cooperation (please type or print):



Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Knowledge is power, but it is only the first part. Read about generational cohort value shaping, major events that occurred in their formative years, etc. Then make it a point to learn about each person to see if he or she “fits” what you read. That person may not at all.
2. Ensure you treat each individual as unique and special, not lumped into a large group that you generalize about.
3. Make it a point to engage in more effective conversations among employees, customers, and stakeholders. Use technology and face-to-face methods to fit everyone’s needs for how they communicate best.
4. Be a change agent. Look at your internal policies and systems as they apply to all members of each generational cohort. Have a cross-generational work team look at policies to attract and retain the best talent.
5. Find out what is needed and what may work better. This is determined through ongoing assessment and conversations with the people involved. Use surveys, focus groups, discussion boards, etc. to get information that will be used to make life better at work.
6. Technology can be great, sometimes. Be open-minded and appropriately critical/evaluative of the value of technology (social media, etc.) to the workplace and workers. Do not dismiss it out of hand; conversely, do not assume it is the golden key to success. For some things, technology is great. For others, it may not be so great. Knowledge of what technology *can* do is good. Assess how it fits the needs you have. Do not hammer a square-peg technology response into something that needs a round-hole solution.
7. On issues relevant to all generations, try to have generational representatives at the table to provide input. Use the cross-generational dialogue and insights to help

pinpoint some key issues that would otherwise be missed—maybe even big, deal-changing issues.

8. As Stephen Covey suggests in his best seller *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1995), we need to seek first to understand and then to be understood. Focus on the individual instead of painting people into groups based on the generational cohort they fall into.
9. Read but then find out. Do not pigeonhole solutions based on the generational cohort traits that are prevalent in the literature. This may help with understanding a group but does little to understand each individual. It may even hurt if the leader stereotypes responses, policies, and solutions without a deeper understanding of what those are.
10. To better understand who each of us are, we, as leaders, need to challenge our own assumptions about generations, every day. We also need to challenge others' assumptions about the generations.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #9 Generational Cooperation

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 10

Leadership Skill Booster #10: Servant Leadership

People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

—John C. Maxwell, leadership author

Examples of good and bad leadership are everywhere. Turn on the TV news, open a newspaper, or look inside your organization. Everywhere you turn, you can identify great and successful leaders, and leaders that are not so great. This final leadership booster comes down to the basic premise: if you want to be a good or great leader, you *have* to care more about others' needs than your own.

I once worked with a group of about fifteen first-line supervisors at a large company in the high-tech industry. I will never forget what one relatively new supervisor asked. At first, I thought she was joking but realized she was not by the serious tone she took. “What if you just do not give a [darn] about the people we lead?” she asked. “I only took this job because it paid twenty cents more per hour. I just do not care.” My response did

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not make her happy. I said, “Wow, how sad. I have to say, unless you change how you feel about what it takes to be a good leader, you are in the wrong job. You are destined to be unhappy, and your people will do everything they can to see that you fail and/or leave the organization.”

At the core, the root, the foundational building block of all things leadership is *caring*. This booster will focus on the key ways a person can show he or she cares and actually become a caring individual, on the inside and the outside. Many of the earlier boosters are touched upon in this final booster. (Remember, these boosters are not presented in any particular order because the one booster that is helpful for you could be any one of the ten.) However, if you decided to read through this entire leadership booster guidebook, perhaps it is no accident that servant (caring) leadership is what I leave you thinking about. Can you incorporate some of what is shared here into what is cared there—with your people at work where it matters most?

Servant leadership is a concept coined by Robert Greenleaf who later founded the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. The concept has been around for a long time. But in our world, especially in the United States, leadership is often equated with grabbing power or “getting products out the door.”

Servant leadership flips that mind-set so we see what *really matters most* in our work lives and away-from-work lives: putting others’ needs before our own. Sounds simple and inspiring, yet my experiences and observations show it is not a common enough practice.

You need to think about the concepts, tips, and strategies provided here as they relate to how *you* relate to others. That is, after all, at the crux of what separates average or good leaders from great ones: relationships. Serve others as their leader (servant leadership) rather than viewing those you lead as your servants.

Leadership Booster #10: Servant Leadership

Case Study 1



Dan took over the organization from Karen. Karen, a former military officer, was about command and control (which may have had a connection to her previous occupation). Karen had been director for about four years but decided to work for the US Army as a consultant. Dan came from a large health-care organization.

The culture shift, from Karen’s hands-on approach on all decisions and actions to Dan’s servant leadership approach, was drastic. Though the change was welcome, there was little trust of leadership, so Dan knew it would take time to convince his folks that he was the authentic person he portrayed in his actions and words.

Dan began his time as director by asking each of his team members to meet with him, one-on-one just to chat about whatever. He started with questions for them, such as “What do you love about working here?” “What do you wish would change if you ruled the earth?”

“What are your career goals or dreams?”

“How can I support you toward reaching those goals? What can I do to serve you better?”

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When Dan used the word *serve*, his team members looked perplexed. He took that opportunity (planted purposefully) to explain his philosophy and approach to being in this leadership role, and what servant leadership meant to him and, hopefully, to the people in the organization.

Dan shared that her success was totally defined by how successful each of them was. He wanted to know what success at work looked and felt like for each of them. He took notes, with their permission, and really listened. Dan said he believed that he was more of a coach and mentor than any other type of leader. He believed in giving away power versus collecting and using it. He realized each person was unique, and he wished to find out where they were, what their strengths were, what their dreams were, and then help them reach their full potential.

Most walked away pleased—a little scared of the culture shift but pleased. Long term, the organization thrived. Turnover and absenteeism went to near zero. Many in the organization were promoted based on all their great work, and Dan was excited to see them grow and move on. He also gave the team the responsibility of hiring replacement members. His leadership was not only refreshing but was also embraced. If anyone else tried to “steal” Dan, they almost had a mutiny to keep him.



Case Study 2

Theresa had a thriving floral business in a very large city in the Northeast. She had twenty-two full-time employees and about the same number of part-timers. Some of her full-timers started there when they were in junior high. They absolutely worshipped Ms. T, as everyone called her.

When they were hired, Theresa shared that she would give them all the support and training they felt they needed and all the coaching they wished, but she would also let them have as much freedom to succeed as they needed. She meant it. She lived it. She was extremely supportive, laid back, and knowledgeable about the business and her customers, and she cared deeply for her employees, clients, and vendors. She loved her work, and it showed in all she did and was for others.

Many days Ms. T. would organize a social event after work. She would tell the employees a few weeks in advance so they could make childcare arrangements. Then she would surprise them with a special meal, a bus trip to a local ball game, a night at the arcade, and other events that (from a previous survey) her folks told her they would find fun and engaging. They loved these outings and never knew what she had planned. Each employee wore team shirts with the florist's logo on them. She also gave each full-time employee four weeks of paid vacation each year, starting his or her first year. She said, "You need to recharge your batteries often, as I want you to be fresh and blossom." Some did not take all of their vacation days because they loved working so much for Ms. T that it was like a vacation at work.



Case Study 3 (what not to do)

The beginning of her reign of terror started on a Tuesday in the fall. Sharon was promoted from a staff nurse to the nurse manager. She had always wanted to be in power, as she knew the changes that needed to be made on her floor, in the department, and eventually when she rose to power as vice president of nursing. She had so many changes to make and so little time to make them. This place really needed a shake-up and a wake-up call. And she was just the person who could do it.

During her first hour as nurse manager, Sharon called everyone into her office and lectured the staff for forty-five minutes on the fact that she would no longer tolerate anything but perfection. Anything less and “there would be heads rolling,” she said. She seemed to be all over the place, watching them, looking for mistakes to fix. She was the new sheriff in town. They walked away with the look of a deer in headlights.

By the next morning, half of her staff called in sick and two had quit. Her boss, the V.P. of Nursing, called her in and said, “What in the world is going on down there? We have never had this in our history. What did you do yesterday?” Sharon said, “I told them my expectations, and they could not handle it.” She went on to share what she said (she had the typed text she had read to her staff the day before). Before she could finish sharing it, she was stopped.

“Okay,” her boss said, “I do not think I prepared you adequately for this transition to management. That, my good nurse, was a huge mistake. Why would you think those words would inspire positive action? I want you to apologize for your abrupt and toxic beginning, and if you cannot do that, you may have had the shortest reign in our hospital’s history as a nurse manager.”

Sharon quit on the spot. She took a much lower-paying position as a nurse about an hour from her house, which gave her plenty of time to rethink what and why she did what she did.

Leadership Booster Servant Leadership Self-Assessment

This checks your view of your servant leadership competencies.

Your name: _____

Check the appropriate response that you feel best describes you.

Rating Scale

Servant Leadership Self-Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as they relate directly to me helping others.					
2. I listen to understand the needs of those I lead.					
3. I seek opportunities to coach and mentor others to develop colleagues.					
4. I accept others for who they are and where they are in their lives, and I do this with empathy.					
5. I am committed to growing the skills and abilities of my people.					
6. I build community and camaraderie in my organization.					
7. My focus is on giving power to others, not getting it for myself.					
8. I am all about unleashing the potential in every person.					
9. I believe in initiating action but base it on flipping the pyramid (i.e., letting my people provide valued inputs on decisions/recommendations).					
10. I am all about working on developing my ability to have more foresight.					

Leadership Booster

Servant Leadership Assessment by Others

This checks your view of your leader's servant leadership competencies.

Leader name: _____

Check the appropriate response you feel best describes this leader.

Rating Scale

Servant Leadership Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral/ Unsure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. My leader is aware of their strengths and weaknesses as they relate to him/her helping others.					
2. My leader listens to understand the needs of those he/she leads.					
3. My leader seeks opportunities to coach and mentor others to develop their colleagues.					
4. My leader accepts others for who they are and where they are in their lives, and they do this with empathy.					
5. My leader is committed to growing the skills and abilities of his/her people.					
6. My leader builds community and camaraderie in the organization.					
7. My leader's focus is on giving power to others, not getting it for themselves.					
8. My leader is all about unleashing the potential in every person.					
9. My leader believes in initiating action but bases it on flipping the pyramid (i.e., letting their people provide valued inputs on decisions/recommendations).					
10. My leader is all about working on developing their ability to have more foresight.					

Based on the assessments, what are this leader's top two servant leadership strengths?

1. 2.

Based on the assessments, what are the top two areas related to servant leadership this leader needs to improve?

1. 2.

- A. What is the one big thing you wish this leader would stop doing, start doing, and/or change how they do it related to servant leadership?
- B. Why that one?

A. B.

Other comments for this leader to consider related to servant leadership (please type or print):

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Leadership Skills Booster Checklist

1. Do a detailed assessment (self-assessment and the peer/others assessment) on how you are doing as a servant leader. Look for your strengths and weaknesses as they relate to *helping others*. Devise a plan to work on those areas in which you show weaknesses and on those areas you wish to ensure remain strong. See this as a nonstop, ongoing challenge to do what you say you will do in this plan. Get others' input on the plan to see if it makes sense. Ask them to hold you accountable.
2. Listen to understand their needs. This is beyond just listening during a conversation. You are listening intently to the needs of the person. Only then can you help to discover, together, a strategy to best meet those needs. This means you need to do more than sit and look at the person. You need to observe them in action over time, conduct informal and formal interviews, use surveys and/or focus groups, have small discussion groups, put up suggestion boxes, conduct needs assessments, and implement 360-degree feedback assessments for key people so they know how they are doing. Use appropriate assessment for that person and that situation to identify needs; then you can work together to meet those needs.
3. Seek to coach and mentor. There is a whole chapter on coaching, but in case you dove into this leadership skill booster without reading that one, here are the ideas for why and how you wish to be a coach and mentor to others:
 - Believe in the potential of each person you try to coach.
 - Remain unattached to an issue, no matter how close to it you are.
 - If you are not sure, do not feel you must fix something right away.
 - Keep your coaching approach light and fun.
 - Stay curious.
 - Be a great listener.

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- Become great at asking appropriate, timely questions.
 - Learn to be skilled at being able to put aside any personal agenda you may have.
 - Continually learn how to employ the various skillful coaching tactics.
4. Everyone is unique. Each person comes with her/his own set of values, experiences, ideals, dreams, and skills. Find out what they are and where they are. Meet them there; accept them for who they are in this life. Find out what they wish and need. As much as is practical, help them to reach their goals, and do it with an empathetic ear and heart.
 5. Commit to the group. It is a collection of individuals working together. Help them feel more like a team (with shared vision and focused efforts toward a collective goal for the good of the whole) rather than a group (a bunch of individuals clumped together to work near one another).
 6. Camaraderie is the magical elixir of team success. If you can build camaraderie (a strong sense of team spirit and caring for each other; a mutual feeling of trust and caring that exists among people who work closely together), then you are well on your way to being a caring servant leader. This sense of shared community develops by following all the other servant leadership tips here. Over time, if you build on these other ideas well, this will be an outcome from those efforts. Check out “Building Teamwork” or “Building Camaraderie” in your search engine. You need the following to build camaraderie/team spirit:
 - A sense of belonging where you work
 - Acceptance for who you are
 - Inclusion— “Make everyone an insider”
 - Occasional fun events, planned to meet diverse interests
 - Clear messages stating that all are welcome
 - Understanding for those who do not choose to participate
 - Good humor
 7. Unleash your team to ensure they have the resources, support, coaching, and tools to do their jobs and pursue their goals and then *let them*. You are there to coach, mentor, and support, not oversee, dictate, or pressure. If a team member makes mistakes,

they will learn from them. You can offer them mentoring as they go. You should also cheer and celebrate their successes, which will unleash even more potential.

8. Focus on *giving*, not on *getting*. Focus on *them*, not *you*. Share help; do not wield power. You can use your power to help but not for ego gratification.
9. Consider abandoning the typical, hierarchical, organizational pyramid with the one, all-powerful boss at the top and the workers all reporting to that one in-charge person. This type of an organizational structure often promulgates filtering information, sharing what the leader wants to hear not what they need to know. This is more of a power model of leading. The flipped pyramid has the leader serving the employees. Allow workers to flourish, make decisions, show leadership, and do good work. If you need to step in to coach, then do so. If you do not, let your team members go and watch them prosper via learning.
10. Muscle into the future. Develop your foresight muscle. This means practice looking out further than today or this week or this month. Look long range, and share with others what you may be envisioning. Kouzes and Posner call this “Inspire a shared vision” in their seminal work, *The Leadership Challenge* (2012). There, they say you need to:
 - Realize leadership is a *dialogue*, not a *monologue*.
 - Display enthusiasm, use vivid language, and have an expressive style.

Commitment and Accountability Call to Action



Leadership Booster #10

Servant Leadership

What one specific behavior will you commit to start doing, stop doing, and/or change how you do it based on this booster?

Specific behavior that I will commit to	By when?	I will share this commitment with ...

I (your name here) _____ commit to focus on this specific behavior outlined above for six months. I give my accountability partner (AP) my permission to ask me often what and how I am doing with this commitment.

Date: _____ Your Signature _____

Date: _____ AP Signature _____



CHAPTER 11

Moving Forward

So you have either read through this *Leadership Boosters* guidebook and are finally here

or

You read the section you wanted to learn more about and jumped back to this area to see what to do now. Either way, you need to know the answer to this: what do I do now to feel more confident and competent in my leadership?

To focus on one or two main things to help you, go to that specific Leadership Booster where you feel you need the most work. Look at the tips under “Leadership Skills Booster Checklist” and pick *one* or *two* (maximum) strategies/tips that fit you, your people, and the situation(s). Then decide when you will start incorporating the skill (the sooner the better). Plan for success and start the plan!

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What specifically will you say and do to show that selected change of behavior is important to you as a leader? Also, and this is *vital*, find an accountability partner—a mentor, trusted colleague, coach, friend, coworker, former boss, etc.—to bring into your plan. By this, I mean give someone permission to check on you each week for at least six months. Tell this person you want and welcome complete honesty.

Be able to answer these six big questions and have the person ask you:

1. How are you doing?
2. How do you know?
3. How are you improving?
4. How do you know it is working?
5. What can you do to improve?
6. How are you sharing your best practices?

For example, let us say you wish to work on, at work and at home, being more optimistic from the people skills booster. That is the competency you believe you need to improve because if you do, other people will find your words and actions contagious, and they will feel more upbeat about their jobs, relationships, and even lives. They will be more engaged in their work. A good thing for all.

To accomplish this, you will do the following:

1. Make a list of positive affirmations and review them from time to time.
2. Find an optimistic person and ask for tips on how he or she does this skill so well. Find one thing this person does that you will commit to do, and do it.

final thoughts

You have read what you needed to read in order to make positive changes in certain aspects of how you lead other people. You have read it. So what?

Reading is NOT leading.

The important things to do are these:

- Do something you should do, and/or
- Stop doing something you should not do, and/or
- Change how you do something

... that you read in this leadership skills booster guidebook.

Also, *do not* forget that you do have strengths. Keep working on maintaining your leadership strengths as you seek continuous improvement in other helpful areas.

Go back to the leadership skill boosters that you feel—or, more importantly, *others* feel—you need to work on the most. Then look at the accountability contract at the end of each chapter and see what you said.

Do you still agree that the action or actions you wrote down will be most helpful to your leadership improvement journey? You should only have *one or two* actions or behaviors to commit to over time to turn into a positive leadership habit. If you attempt to make too many changes, you will feel overwhelmed and likely fail. *Focus on the vital few.*

To help you get started, have someone who does well at the booster you have chosen give you advice, coaching tips, etc. It can be your accountability person or someone else.

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It *must* be someone you know who excels in this area or these areas. Also, the person needs to agree to give you specific guidance.

3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Lift off!



Finally, we orbit back to the rocket booster analogy. Think again about what a rocket booster is there to do: to add additional thrust and energy to an already moving object, and to jettison a rocket even faster and more powerfully. If you are a leader (i.e., that rocket), these boosters are the positive, high-impact, immediately useful, easily understood ways to get there faster and more powerfully.

I wish you all the success you deserve as you take flight ...
success for you and for those you take with you.

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