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Believe in Your Ability to Be an Effective Leader

Leadership ability and effectiveness are enhanced tremendously by a leadership philosophy that calls for belief in the worth of people, belief in their abilities, and belief in their potential for growth. This leadership philosophy forms a bedrock foundation for building sound relationships with team members – relationships that lead to personal growth and success for them, for their manager, and for the entire organization. Effective leaders possess this philosophy. They light the spark of imagination and creativity in themselves and in their followers. Effective leaders seek to unleash their own untapped potential as well as that of their people.

This optimistic philosophy of leadership is based on the assumption that you, as a motivated individual, can learn the skills essential to effective leadership. You undoubtedly already possess many of the skills needed for both personal and organizational effectiveness in a management position. The skills you now possess will serve as a foundation for further development and for adding techniques to your inventory of available resources as you work to achieve results through other people.

Status of a Leader

Any leadership position carries with it certain status, privileges, opportunities, and power. These benefits are a part of your compensation. You have the right to enjoy them; you have earned them. But privileges carry with them their own responsibilities. Recognize that the unique position that brings you honor and prestige also requires making decisions, solving problems, and performing services that no one else in the organization can perform. Your willingness to accept personal responsibility for your own leadership effectiveness will be admired and emulated by your team members. Acceptance of personal responsibility also means you admit to your team when you make a poor decision. After all, you are not perfect. People will respect you more, not less, for your openness and candor.

An effective leadership philosophy also encompasses a sense of ethical responsibility. The ethics of an organization is concerned with the way people behave and with the values or standards that govern their actions and choices. Leaders are responsible for choosing the goals of the organization, establishing its direction, and determining its ethical standards. Ethical standards grow out of the basic beliefs and personal values of the top leaders. Effective leaders maintain these basic ethical responsibilities:

- They obey the law. Operating within both the letter and the spirit of the law is a responsibility of leadership. Most laws are designed to protect particular portions of the population: employees, workers, consumers, or the general public. Organizational rules and procedures should make it clear to all employees that the law must be obeyed. Policies and procedures should also make it possible for employees to do their work well while satisfying legal requirements.
- They deal honestly with clients or customers. Ethical behavior toward clients is more than a matter of right and wrong; it is good business as well, for satisfied customers come back again and again. Honest dealing includes providing a high quality product or service for consumers. They have the right to expect that the product or service you market will accomplish what you claim and that it can be used with safety and confidence. Your clients should also be able to trust you to keep your commitments in regard to quality, delivery time, price, and credit terms.
- They treat team members fairly. Effective leaders seek to achieve the greatest possible results through directing the efforts of people. But if they exploit people in the process of achieving results, they stand to lose good workers and, in the long run, lose the ability to produce results. Since the results achieved by the organization come from the efforts of all those who have a part in the work, it is the responsibility of the leader to see that everyone benefits from what is earned in the process.

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