



What Differentiates Successful Leaders Today?

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Here's the quick answer: The key is excelling at the “**Art of Relationship**”

Why is successfully managing relationships so important?

Because you must get results--AND--you must develop and maintain your relationships with the people that you have to influence to achieve these results.

Regardless of our role, you and I are service providers to people inside and outside our organizations. We must get things done with and through others.

Success in getting things done with others is being redefined in interpersonal terms. What do I mean by this? Needs and alliances and reporting relationships are constantly shifting. Power (demanding compliance because of your position) is no longer enough in this roiling sea of influence and webs of connections.

You must gain commitment. And commitment is created through an influence process that is often interpersonal. The art of relationship may be between you and another person or with you and a group of individuals in a team or in a task force setting.

What is required to be able to master the art of relationship?

It requires emotional competence. Research over the last thirty years has proven that the emotional capabilities account for 80-90% of the difference in highly successful versus less successful leaders. These competencies include self-awareness, self-mastery, empathy and influence.

Boyatzis and Goleman in their book “Primal Leadership”, state that “an emotionally intelligent leader can monitor his or her needs through self-awareness, change them for the better through self-management, understand their impact through empathy, and act in ways that boost other’s moods through relationship management.”

In the coaching work that I do with my clients, the key area of focus is helping each person enhance his or her self-awareness. This is the foundation for all the relationship competencies.

Why? If I don't understand what motivates me, what triggers my hot buttons, and what my intentions are with others, I am not able to manage my behavior effectively.

I am not able to stay focused and bounce back from adversity. I am not able to listen clearly to what the other person is saying verbally and non-verbally. I am not able to coach or influence others effectively. Others will not experience me as authentic. I will not be open my feelings, beliefs and actions. They will not be confident that what I say is what I believe and what I promise is what I will do. In other words, they will not be open to take risks and make commitments with me.

How do you develop these capabilities that are essential for excellence?

Our behaviors in relating to others are habits. When we behave in a way that gets a desired result, we keep repeating that behavior. This literally creates a pathway in our brain that becomes quick and efficient. However, the habit may not be effective as we face new challenges. The good news is that new capabilities can be learned and we can repave our neural pathways. We can change and improve in this “art of relationship.”

How do you change these habits?

From my experience with clients, there are five success criteria to make changes in our behavior:

- It requires commitment and courage to risk and experiment with new ways of relating to others. We have to stretch beyond our “Comfort Zone”.
- It requires self-awareness. There is an old adage that says “it takes two to know one”. This means that to know myself I have to get feedback on how I impact other— as well as examine my own intentions, thinking, emotions and behaviors with others.
- It requires a plan to give myself a focus on what I want to change in my behaviors.
- It requires practice to make behavior change that lasts. This “practice” is best accomplished on the job. Start by stretching 20% outside your “Comfort Zone.” If you stub your toe, the downside risk is manageable.
- It requires an opportunity to receive ongoing feedback and coaching. This enables me to monitor and make midcourse adjustments based on actual results. The support to do this can come from colleagues and managers as well as a trusted advisor/coach.



So how effective are you in the “art of relationship”

In future issues of The Change Ability Challenge, we will help you answer that question. We'll also examine how to improve your effectiveness in this “art of relationship”. Useful tips will be offered for getting things done more effectively with others using examples from my life and that of my clients (anonymous of course).

Whenever you would like to explore how you can more effectively master this “art of relationship” and achieve the results you’ve always wanted as a leader, please give me a call at 650.856.1752 or email me at cronkite@dirigoconsulting.com.

Resource Recommendation

Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence by D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis and A. McKee, Harvard Business School Press, 2002.