



Leadership Insights & Actions

"Coaching News That Leaders Can Use"

January /2009

Are You a Best or Worst Boss?

Discover What Behaviors Can Make You Succeed or Fail

by Thomas J. Haizlip, M.A.

In a study by the Kaisen Consulting Group, across a wide range of industries, employees were asked to identify which qualities they associated with their best and worst bosses. The "best" bosses were consistently rated as being more approachable, committed to the success of their employees, and consistently acting with honesty and integrity. In contrast, "worst" bosses tended to show little regard or sensitivity toward the needs or feelings of their employees. Instead, they focused primarily on their own success, often lost their temper when questioned by others, and would even bully any employees who dared to disagree with them. The 10 most common characteristics associated with the best and worst bosses are listed below:

Top 10 Qualities of the Best Bosses

1. Be open and approachable to employees when they have questions or concerns
2. Be supportive and frequently encourage your employees
3. Act as a role model for professional conduct; calm, honest, and open to ideas
4. Actively invest the time and energy to professionally develop your employees
5. Empower your employees to make decisions for themselves
6. Inspire others by creating a compelling vision of future success
7. Be a good listener and make time for others
8. Actively recognize and reward people for doing the "right thing"
9. Be able to communicate clearly with others
10. Take a genuine interest in the personal lives of your employees

Top 10 Qualities of the Worst Bosses

1. Poor communication with others
2. Always try to take credit instead of being a team player
3. Constantly try to make yourself look good
4. Act unprofessionally; bend the facts to make yourself look good
5. Micromanage your employees and don't let them make decisions
6. Get upset and frequently yell and scream at even minor mistakes
7. Do not show any interest in the personal lives of your employees
8. Always focus on the task at hand instead of the big picture
9. Avoid accepting responsibility and shift blame whenever things go wrong
10. Bully others into submission when they disagree or ask too many questions

How to Become a More Confident Leader

10 Things You Can Do to Become a More Effective Leaders

by Thomas J. Haizlip, M.A.

Leadership, especially in this tough economy, can be a very demanding job. People are constantly looking to you for direction, encouragement, and guidance. Sometimes a leader can get so focused on taking care of other people's needs that they often end up neglecting their own. This does not make you a better leader. In fact, it can leave you feeling depleted, increase your stress, decrease your self-control, increase feelings of anger and hostility, and even lead to career burnout.

Being an a strong and effective leader means that you should also be a role model for how your followers should take care of themselves. Leaders need to remember that self-care is not the same thing selfishness or neglect of professional responsibility. If you hope to be able to inspire and motivate others, then you have got to find a way to stay motivated and engaged yourself. By following the strategies I've outlined below, you can focus on your own well being and increase the resources you will have available to focus on the needs of others.

1. Take Care of Yourself First

Effective leaders know that they must make time for themselves to relax and unwind from the pressures of the job. Make time for relaxation by doing yoga or going for a massage. Eat healthier. Coffee and Red Bull are not the breakfast of champions. Make it a point to spend time with people whom you enjoy doing activities which give you pleasure.

2. Focus on the Positive

Far too many leaders think they are only as good as their last accomplishment. You are more than the sum of your achievements. Stop looking for validation outside of yourself and learn how to like yourself. Do you enjoy being inside your own skin? Even the greatest accomplishment will only give you momentary relief from a feeling of insecurity and doubt. Benjamin Franklin said, "Worrying about things before they happen is like paying interest on money before you borrow it."

3. Let Go of Your Past

It does not matter that you could have handled that last meeting better or you think you sounded "stupid" during your last presentation to your department. The past is gone. We can learn from it, we can make amends, we can strive to do better, but we can not undo the past. We have all made mistakes, felt embarrassed and acted in ways that made us feel ashamed later. Welcome to the human race. You must refuse to invest time and

energy in things that cannot benefit you. Practice self-compassion, learn how to forgive yourself, and accept that you will never be perfect.

4. Be Respectful & Responsible

You do not have to like everyone, but you must make it a point to practice civility toward all people. It is not leadership when you justify bad behavior by pointing out that everyone else does the same thing as well. Pointing out the bad behavior of others is not justification for your own. Stop keeping score and act with integrity for your own sake. Be accountable for your actions and be willing to admit when you do not know something or if you have made a mistake. Bold risks are signs of a strong leader, but not all risks succeed. Be willing to admit when you fail or make a mistake and do not pass the buck or play the blame game.

5. Take Credit For Your Accomplishments

If you are not willing to be an advocate for yourself, why should anyone else be willing to advocate for you? No one likes a narcissist, but false modesty is just as bad in the long run. You should take pride in your accomplishments and be willing to cite your strengths to others. Remember, leaders need self-confidence and being able to talk about where you add value is not the same thing as bragging or being self-centered.

6. Acquire 2 Close Friends

No man (or woman) is an island. Make the time and invest the energy to develop two close personal friends with who you can invest your thoughts and feelings. Be careful, sometimes leaders attract people who need to be led. Friendship means that you should be able to take turns giving and receiving advice and emotional support. A good friend is like a good stock, you should be able to expect a return on your investment. Spend at least 1 hour per week with each friend, even it means just chatting on the phone. When things get hectic at work, make it a point to spend more time with them, not less.

7. Learn to Talk Positively to Yourself

Do you talk to yourself the same way you would talk to a close friend? It always amazes me how many high functioning leaders have such negative self-talk. No one grows through self-criticism and blame. Learn to pay attention to your own self-critical thoughts. Left unchecked, they can become your undoing. Even the best leader has moments of irrational thinking, but good leaders learn how to identify their own self-defeating thoughts and then replace them with more positive and rational self-statements.

8. Remove Yourself From Painful Situations

It is far better to excuse yourself and get up and walk away from a situation that is getting out of control than to lose your temper and say things you will later regret. Never feel like you have to get even with someone or pay them back for an unkind remark. When you get upset, make it a point to give yourself at least one day to think about things and reflect before deciding what to do next. Some of my most prized possessions are words that I have never spoken.

9. Accept That Your Choices Will Limit Future Choices

Like the saying goes, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Actions that you take today will have an effect on the choices you have left tomorrow. If you hope to achieve great success, you must be able to tolerate and accept risk. The secret to doing this well is to knowing yourself so you know how much risk you can effectively manage. Across time, your confidence will grow and you will be able to handle things you once never thought yourself capable of doing. There is no way to avoid choosing or managing risk. Remember,

even choosing to do nothing is, in itself, a choice.

10. Develop A Personal Mission Plan

I am not talking about a business plan or corporate mission statement. But you should figure out a purpose for why you were put on this planet? This does not have to be overly complicated or deeply analytical. My own personal mission is to "learn as much as I can and to teach others as much as I can." Whenever I feel drained or listless, I ask myself, is what I am doing is aligned with my mission? If not, I almost always figure some way to make a course correction in my life to get my actions back in line with my mission and I soon feel an increased sense of renewal and energy.

Great Management Is No Substitute for Great Leadership

About Thomas J. Haizlip, M.A.

Since 2000, I have helped transform great managers into great leaders. My experience and training as an expert in human behavior allows me to quickly assess and analyze what you need to do differently to move forward. Over 50% of my clients have been promoted after working with me and learning how to become a more effective leader. Please, give me a call so I can help you move from where you are to where you want to be as a leader.

Phone: (336) 664-1100

Website: www.skillsforsuccess.ws



Thomas J. Haizlip, M.A.
(336) 664-1100
Skills For Success, Inc.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)