Earning Respect: A Key to Helping Others View You As A Leader



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The Double Bind

- We all find it challenging to view a woman in a nontraditional role as competent
- Once she has unquestionably established her competence, we tend to not like her.
- This twin challenge of being viewed as competent and liked is called the *Double Bind*.
- Why does it matter? Because being viewed as both competent and liked are key to being successful in the workplace.

Respect and Leadership

- You are a leader in the classroom, in your department/program, in your research lab, on committees, etc.
- If you are respected, people will follow you, are motivated to work hard for you, and will find it hard not to like you!
- 50+ years ago our society respected people in positions of authority. Today you have to earn respect.
- There are other countries where the authority = respect equation still holds true, so people from those cultures tend to be more respectful of persons in positions of authority.

How can you Earn Respect?

- Be consistent.
- Be punctual.
- Be responsive.
- Be right most of the time, but be comfortable being wrong.
- Forgive others and yourself for mistakes.
- Show respect to others when they are wrong and right.
- Help those who are holding you back, but not too much.

Be consistent

- Lack of consistency is saying one thing but doing another.
- It is a primary culprit behind lack of credibility.
- Being consistent helps you combat the "competency" issue by strengthening your credibility.
- People will pay attention to what you say until you give them a reason not to by:
 - failing to keep your word
 - not being reliable/dependable
 - being wishy washy/changing your mind
 - not supporting in public what you say in private

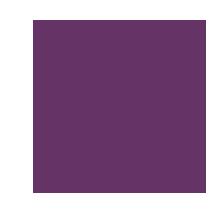
Be Punctual

- Time is a valuable commodity in today's workplace.
- Making people wait without good reason causes them to lose respect for you.
- Why? Missing appointments and being late communicates a disregard for the lives and needs of others.
- Get control of your calendar use a planner, online calendar, sync your phone/online calendar, set reminders, etc.

Be responsive

- People can communicate with you via email, text, phone, in person, notes in your chair...figure out what works for you and let people know.
- When you don't respond in a timely manner, you impact the ability of those around you to do their work. It shows a lack of respect for them.
- Steer people toward your preferred communication method and respond within 24 hours (even if it is just to say that you will get back with them).

Be right most of the time, but be comfortable with being wrong

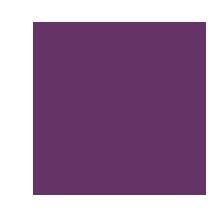


- The simplest way to be right is to do your homework and think ahead of time about the best way to state things (women do this well!!).
- You will have to make an educated guess when information is scarce or you are doing something new (you may not be comfortable with this).
- It's okay to guess don't be afraid to take a qualified risk manage everyone's expectations by identifying it as your best guess or a trial or your opinion.
- When (not if!) you're wrong, smile and 'fess up! If you are sincerely apologetic, people are far more forgiving than if you try to blame someone else, act as if nothing is wrong, etc.

Forgive Others and Yourself for Mistakes

- Good leaders encourage experimentation and create environments of "safe" failure. Creative people needs some space to try things, fail, and try again! So...
- Encourage people around you to take mitigated risks.
- Set an example for others on how to accept a failure, learn from it, and do better next time.
- If you are forgiving of yourself and others, if you look for and believe the best about others, they will be grateful, respect you and live up to your expectations.

Show Respect to Others when they are Wrong and Right



- Disparaging someone for making an error reflects worse on you than it does on them - its immature and shows a lack of respect for others.
- Any jealous tendencies you display toward the success of others will also reflect poorly on you again, its immature and self-centered.
- Live as if you were in a glass body that is, assume that everyone can see inside your heart and thoughts! Make sure they all reflect well on you and on others.

Help those who are holding you back, but not too much.

- Good leaders help those around them succeed by mentoring them to overcome weakness or lack of skill, but...
- People quickly lose respect for a leader who tolerates habitual slackers or troublemakers at the expense of the group's success.
- Know when to support weak players and when to cut them loose.

Conclusion

- You are a leader every day whether you have an official leadership "title" or not.
- You are a role model every day to undergraduate students, graduate students, other faculty, staff.
- Your personal leadership legacy will not be remembered because of your academic pedigree. Most likely, it will be the positive but personal impact you had on those around you! Leading in a way that elicits the respect of those around you makes a lasting, positive impression – your leadership legacy!!

References

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