

Ignite!

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Developing a Leadership Point of View

In this issue of Ignite! you will learn how to develop your leadership point of view. Not only will this help you clarify your thoughts on leadership, it will also prepare you to share your leadership point of view with others.

Why is developing a clear leadership point of view important?

Once you have developed a clear leadership point of view, it becomes possible to clearly communicate it with those around you. By sharing your leadership point of view with the people who report to you, they will not only have the benefit of understanding where you're coming from but they'll also understand what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. Your sharing can help them—and those around them—explore their own thinking about leadership.

Ken Blanchard was sold on this idea after reading Noel Tichy's book, *The Leadership Engine*, and talking with Noel while consulting with Yum! Brands. Noel's extensive research has shown that effective leaders have a clear, teachable leadership point of view and are willing to teach it to others, particularly the people they work with.

Elements of a Leadership Point of View

In determining your leadership point of view, you should be able to answer seven questions:

1. Who are the influencers (leaders) in your life?
When we ask people who most impacted their lives, seldom do they mention bosses or other organizational leaders. More often they talk about their parents, grandparents, friends, coaches, or teachers. What did you learn from these people about leadership? How did their influences help your leadership point of view evolve?
2. Think of your life purpose. Why are you here and what do you want to accomplish?
If an organization doesn't have a clear purpose and sense of what business it's in, there's something wrong. Yet few people have a clear sense of their life's purpose. How can you make good decisions about how you should use your time if you don't know what business you're in?

3. Which of your core values will guide your behavior as you attempt to live your life "on purpose"?

It has been said that the most important thing in life is to decide what's most important. People don't all value the same things. Some people value wealth and power, while others are more concerned with safety or survival. Success is a value; integrity and relationships are values as well. Values are beliefs you feel strongly about because you choose them over other alternatives.

In trying to determine what your values are, you might start with a long list. But fewer are better, particularly if you want your values to guide your behavior. We contend that more than three or four values is too many and can become immobilizing. Pick out what you think are your most important values.

You'll also want to rank order your values. Why? Because values are sometimes in conflict. For example, if you value financial growth but integrity is your core value, any activities that could lead to financial gain must first be checked against your integrity value. The Ken Blanchard Companies® values are rank ordered as Ethical Behavior, Relationships, Success, and Learning.

4. Given what you've learned from past leaders, your life purpose, and your core values, what are your beliefs about leading and motivating people?
Your beliefs are the essence of your leadership point of view. These should flow naturally from the people who have influenced you and from your purpose and values.
5. What can your people expect from you?
Leadership is not something you do to people, it's something you do with people. Letting people know what they can expect from you underscores the idea that leadership is a partnership process. It gives people a picture of what your behavior will look like under your leadership.
6. What do you expect from your people?
Because leading is a partnership process, it is perfectly reasonable—in fact, it's imperative—that you let people know what you expect from them. It gives people a picture of what their behavior will look like under your leadership.
7. How will you set an example for your people?
Your leadership point of view should let others know how you will set an example for the values and behaviors you are encouraging. As most parents know, people learn from your behavior, not from your words. Leaders must walk their talk. Developing a leadership point of view, by following the method above, creates a clear path for you to follow.

And Finally

As you develop your own leadership point of view, don't be hard on yourself. This might be your first time thinking about your beliefs about leading and motivating people. Incorporate the ideas above and keep working at it. Have open and honest dialogues with those you lead and with those who lead you. The world needs more leaders who are leading at a higher level. Be a leader who makes a positive difference. People are counting on you.

