

Leading The SELF

One of the biggest challenges current and future leaders face is to be able to "lead themselves" before going out and attempting to lead others. Being grounded and as clear as possible on your own values, preferences, ways of working and communicating with others and ways of doing things, especially in times of stress and pressure, is a vital first step to becoming an effective leader.

In order to be successful in leading at work, having strong personal leadership skills is critical. When you are able to take responsibility for decisions you are making in all areas of your life and you are making those decisions in your own best interest, you are better able to have a positive and inspiring impact on others. You are also able to be a role model for others in the leadership arena.

Factors that impact strong personal leadership skills:

A. **First is your mindset.** Mindset is defined as, "A fixed mental attitude or disposition that predetermines a person's responses to and interpretations of situations." Having a positive attitude and perspective about personal leadership and making decisions that are in your best interest is your first step towards strong personal leadership skills. Having positive beliefs and expectations about what will result when you make choices in your own best interest and setting intentions for positive outcomes are all part of having a positive mindset about personal leadership.

Our mindset about personal leadership and being strong in this area will be the foundation of our success in this area and translates to leadership skills at work.

B. **Second is energy.** How are you managing your energy? Are you taking time to renew yourself and do things to nurture yourself? This all supports you in being able to make the choices that will lead you in directions that are best for you.

This translates into your leadership skills at work; managing your energy in all areas of your life enables you to give your best both personally and professionally and to be at your best when you are both at home and at work.

C. **Third is having a support system.** Having strong personal leadership skills means you have a network of people to support you through making choices that are in your best interest. These people are your sounding boards, trusted colleagues, family and friends, and anyone who you define as part of your inner circle of confidantes. These are the people who know you and who you trust. They are the ones you can bounce ideas off of, vent to, and seek advice, and counsel from.

This, again, translates to your being a strong leader at work. We all know the importance of having a strong network in our careers; people who can advocate for us, listen to us, help us and for whom we do the same. Strong personal leadership skills require the same type of network.

Strong personal leadership is about being the best leader in your personal life, just as you are in your professional life. It's about making the choices and decisions in your own best interest, just as you do when you make work decisions that are in the best interest of your company or your team. It's about taking full responsibility for the choices that work best for you, so you can be your best for others.

Having strong personal leadership skills also makes you an outstanding role model for those you lead at work and demonstrates these vital skills to them so that they can do the same in their lives.

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