



## **Level Two: Leading Others**

Leader Step | Leading Others  
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# LEADING OTHERS

## Growing the Character and Skills to Lead Others

Leadership is influence; nothing more, nothing less. That's the assertion of renowned leadership expert, Dr. John Maxwell. Yet few of us are natural-born leaders. Fortunately, though, the traits that are the raw material of leadership can be developed. When you connect those traits with godly character and personal desire, nothing can prevent you from becoming a leader. Leader Step, Relevant's "leadership pipeline," will supply you with important leadership principles. You must supply the desire.

Leadership begins with leading yourself. When self-leadership is fruitful, one can more effectively learn to lead others. Eventually, as leadership skills are developed and honed, a leader at Relevant may progress to lead other leaders, entire ministry areas, and/or staff. **Once you have completed this Leader Step guide on Leading Others, you will know how and be able to:**

1. **Balance getting things done and caring for people along the way.**
2. **Resolve conflict in ways that value people while advancing the mission of Jesus.**
3. **Build trust with people and help connect them within the church.**
4. **Genuinely encourage people and bring out the best in them.**
5. **Identify potential leaders and set them up for future effectiveness.**

Each level of Leader Step focuses on the development of five essential competencies required of leaders at each level. These competencies, when mastered, will allow the leader to live out the skills listed above personally, professionally, and in their ministry roles.

## Key Competencies for Leading Others

- Developing community and care among team
- Resolving conflict with mission, vision, values, and culture in mind
- Creating a culture of connecting people in ways that break down walls and build trust
- Encouraging others personally and relationally
- Identifying and engaging emerging leaders

# HOW TO USE THE LEADER STEP GUIDES

The purpose of these guides is to cultivate an abundant harvest of reproducing leaders. Easier said than done, we know! So, what do we mean by “reproducing leaders?” Simply stated, we have redefined leadership so that it encompasses the idea that leaders are not simply leading people, but they are finding and developing new leaders. There is a process of cultivation when it comes to forming leaders.

## How are the guides organized?

Each study guide focuses on a particular level of leadership. There are multiple levels of leadership for you to study, depending on where you are in your journey. Within each level are five competencies, which are specific skill sets one must master to have a fundamental grasp leadership at that particular level.

## How do I know which guide or proficiency is right for me?

Together, you and your trainer will decide the level or skill that best suits your current position (or prospective position) of leadership, needs, and experience.

## Do I need a trainer to complete guide?

Yes. The relationship between the trainer and trainee is vital to the learning process. You wouldn't expect a garden to grow apart from a gardener—neither can we expect growth without the help of another person. You and your trainer will each have a copy of the same guide to work through together.

## How are these guides organized?

Each guide teaches five competencies or skills. Each competency is addressed in one module of reading, assignments and debriefing questions. Typically, it 5-6 meetings over approximately 90 days or fewer, to complete the entire guide. Each module within the guide begins with a scripture focus, followed by three sections:

**EXPLORE: A Time to Think – you will read a specific resource**

**EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try – you will begin applying what you are learning**

**EVALUATE: A Time to Talk – you will discuss the results with your trainer**

The modules are very interactive and will require you to write your answers and thoughts, much like a journal. Also included in each module are:

- ...a Scriptural basis for the competency.
- ...a profile of what this competency looks like in real life.
- ...a challenge to teach someone else what you are learning.

COMPETENCY #1:

**Develops Community and Care  
Among Team**

## Competency + Character:

Remember, each competency should deepen your character, too.

*"And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."*

Psalm 78:72

Rewrite this verse in your own words below:

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What principle does this verse teach?

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How does it apply to your life right now?

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## Profile: What This Looks Like in Real Life

To you, caring for your team is your primary ministry. Beyond what you hope to accomplish together in terms of tasks, your focus is on the spiritual health the ones you lead, and simple pastoral care. You initiate conversations with members on your team or in your group about how they are doing spiritually and relationally, and how they would most like to grow; you respond with encouragement and suggestions to help them take next steps in their faith. You are also keenly aware that your effectiveness as a leader flows from the health of your own soul.

## EXPLORE: A Time to Think

**Resources (click the links below or refer to pp. 9-11):**

**["Caring For Your Team"](#) by Ian Rock (orangeblogs.org)**

**["How to Care for Your Volunteers"](#) by Josh Griffin & Kurt Johnston (churchleaders.com)**

The topic of caring for your team is key to a healthy ministry. We love when our ministry is humming along the way we designed, but if we don't take the time to intentionally care for those we lead, we're setting ourselves and teams up for failure. These two articles offer some practical ways you can add more personal care to your team.

As you read, reflect on and journal your answers to the following questions. Prepare to share your responses with your trainer.

What stood out to you the most?

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What challenged your thinking the most?

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In what area(s) do you most need to grow and what action step(s) will you take?

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What area(s) of strength these readings affirm for you personally?

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## EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try

The following exercise is designed to help reinforce the principles you are learning about this competency. Complete this assignment before your meet with your trainer to review this competency.

Assignment: Based on the concepts you read, plan and carry out two (2) specific acts of care within next two (2) weeks with one or more persons in your sphere of influence (this could be a fellow ministry team member, a coworker, or family member). Describe what you did and the reactions you observed.

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## EVALUATE: A Time to Talk

To guide your conversation with your trainer, discuss your response to the following:

What kinds of words, actions, or responses from another person indicate to you that he/she genuinely cares for you?

Describe an instance when someone made you feel valued? What was your reaction?

As a leader, what kinds of unique information about individual team members can help you understand ways to express care in meaningful ways?

What are some ways that a leader can express care or add value to a team member in an individualized way (i.e., based on something unique about the team member's personality, interests, family, job, etc.)?

In the context of a small group or ministry team setting at Relevant, what are some ways to foster a sense of community and care among the members involved?

*"Once we clearly acknowledge the soul, we can learn to hear its cries."*

—Dallas Willard

## Equip: A Time to Train Someone Else

Teaching something you've learned helps reinforce it in your mind. To further refine your own competency of **DEVELOPING COMMUNITY AND CARE AMONG YOUR TEAM**, share the general principles from this session with a friend or take another leader through this session. Be prepared to share your experience with your trainer the next time you meet.

# Caring for Your Team

By Ian Rock (orangeblogs.org)

I remember sitting in the mechanic's office about four summers ago. My car had been in the shop for a broken A/C for a few days, and it was time to pick it up. The mechanic was on the phone with another customer, talking through the extensive list of repairs that they were going to have to make. As he hung up the phone, he sighed and shook his head. He went on to tell me the car should easily have a life of 200,000+ miles, based on the make and model. The driver had carelessly skipped all of the normal basic maintenance (oil and filter changes, tire rotations, etc.) since owning the car, and parts were beginning to fail. He was estimating the car wouldn't make it to 75,000 miles given the current level of care. Their lack of intentionality and care had crippled the machine they had been driving.

Those of us who lead teams of staff and/or volunteers spend countless hours building our well-oiled machines of systems, processes, and people. We love when our ministry is humming along the way we designed, but if we don't take the time to intentionally care for those we lead, we're setting ourselves and teams up for failure.

*To be the leader your team needs, you must to take the time to know and care for them individually.*

So much goes into making us who we are. Our personalities, past, dreams, relationships, successes, and failures all combine into the powerful story that God is continuing to write with our lives. It's because of this that our teams, whether of 3 or 300, resemble the diversity described in Romans 12. We can't expect our natural style of leadership and our personality to reach each member of our team with the same level of effectiveness.

It's vital that we develop processes in which we, as leaders, are regularly investing the time and intentionality necessary to know those we lead. Most ministries put a ton of time into getting to know leaders when initially placing them in a role, but once a need is met, it's easy to allow those relationships to fall off the radar.

We easily fall into the trap of believing we only need to step in when an issue arises. We dismiss it with a bi-directional, "no news is good news," attitude while not understanding the damage we're doing by not actively nurturing open channels of communication. Sit with those you directly lead with regularity, and prioritize them as an individual. Get to know what's going on behind the scenes at home and work. Listen to their dreams. Learn from their experiences.

When it comes to their role on your team, focus more on how you can better lead and support them, rather than merely their tasks and projects. This means we, as leaders, must be humble and teachable enough to ask for and welcome feedback. You'll both walk away from these meetings better equipped to carry out the vision you have for your ministry or organization. As a leader, the most powerful asset you have is not your personality, creativity, or your ability to communicate or cast vision—it's those that help carry out the vision and processes you've laid out. By intentionally giving them time, you'll have a greater appreciation for the diversity that sits on your team. You'll be able to ensure leaders are in a role that best fits their gifts and passions. Most importantly, you'll be reminded that there's a powerful story behind that name on the org chart.

*To put it simply, we must care more about the people we lead than their contributions to the team.*

If you have a member of your team that is underperforming, more than likely it isn't a competency issue, or you wouldn't have placed them in that role in the first place. Personally, the seasons I'm struggling to stay on task or maintain a standard of excellence are the ones that I'm either distracted or burdened by things outside of my role. It's typically not a competency or passion issue, but something external.

So, for that staff member that you used to have a great working chemistry with, but recently have been butting heads for no apparent reason, there's likely something going on behind the scenes that's manifesting itself at work. It's on you to love them well enough to help them process what the distraction might be, even if it's you.

That volunteer that has either cancelled or no-showed the past few times they were supposed to serve? They more than likely didn't wake up one morning and dedicate their life to making your Sunday mornings miserable. It's on you to care for them enough to get feedback on why that serving role isn't working out for them.

*The individual stories and wirings of our staffs and volunteers are a testament to God's creativity.*

You'll become a better leader for taking the time to really know those you lead, and I can guarantee your team will be better for it.

# **How to Care for Your Volunteers**

## **By Josh Griffin & Kurt Johnston (churchleaders.com)**

The topic of caring for and training your team of leaders is key to a healthy ministry. Here are a few practical ways you can add more personal care to your team:

### **Know them well**

I (Josh) remember when a key leader at our church remembered all 4 of my kid's names without missing a beat. It was a big deal! I stumble over my kid's name sometimes, so it was totally impressive. It was a reminder to me that sometimes the little things send big "I care" messages. Set up recurring calendar alerts to trigger a reminder about a birthday or important date in their family history. Stalk them on Facebook – whatever it takes. Truly caring for the leaders on your team is one of your primary roles....and you can't truly care for them unless you truly know them.

### **Surprise them**

My (Josh) wife is shocked when I bring home flowers. My (Kurt) wife is shocked when I pick up my socks. Their delight and surprise is because for most people there are few things better than a "I was thinking of you" gesture. Write an unexpected note, or buy a small "thank you" gift for someone in your ministry, and see how they respond! We recently sent our volunteers fresh-baked cookies in the mail. We've shown up to their place of work to deliver ice cold drinks, and we've given them an unexpected weekend off...and paid for them to go on a date when they would normally be serving at church. Surprise!

### **Be there when things go bad**

Life is full of good, bad and ugly things. Show up when life takes a rough turn or they get bad news. Caring for your teammates in need is one of our key responsibilities as leaders. You know this feeling all too well – there's nothing worse than a leader who feels distant when you need them most. Be present. Send a card. Send flowers. Attend the funeral, even if you didn't know their great-aunt Matilda. Give them time.

### **Be quick to coach, forgive and restore**

One of the final aspects of caring for your leaders is showing them grace. Over time you'll begin to master the nuances of caring for your team – when to drop the hammer, when to forgive, when to overlook and when to make a big deal out of something. Sometimes the best way to care for a leader is to show them grace by giving them a second chance.

COMPETENCY #2:

**Resolves Conflict with Mission, Vision,  
Values, And Culture in Mind**

## Competency + Character:

Remember, each competency should deepen your character, too.

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

Romans 12:18

Rewrite this verse in your own words below:

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What principle does this verse teach?

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How does it apply to your life right now?

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## Profile: What This Looks Like in Real Life

You have an appropriate view of the inevitability of personal conflict. When it arises, you pick up the phone or knock on a door or have a face-to-face conversation to address any outstanding grievances you have against another person (or vice versa); you search for creative solutions that are biblically-based. When the conflict is related to ministry, you let mission, vision, values, and culture guide you to solutions. You demonstrate true remorse and sorrow for having offended someone and seek reconciliation. You also have the ability to smooth things over with other people, gently restoring the relationship with others who have offended you.

## EXPLORE: A Time to Think

**Resource (click the link below or refer to pp. 16-19):**

**["Seven Healthy Ways to Resolve Conflict at Church or Work"](#)**

**by Carey Nieuwhof ([careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com))**

Many churches simply don't grow because they suffer from conflict and many teams never thrive because there's simply too much tension. Conflict happens wherever people gather: in families, in churches, at work and in communities at large. In this insightful article, pastor and leadership expert, Carey Nieuwhof (NEW-hoff), offers several biblical and practical ways to resolve conflict.

As you read, reflect on and journal your answers to the following questions. Prepare to share your responses with your trainer.

What stood out to you the most?

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What challenged your thinking the most?

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In what area(s) do you most need to grow and what action step(s) will you take?

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What area(s) of strength these readings affirm for you personally?

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## EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try

The following exercises are designed to help reinforce the principles you are learning about this competency. Complete each assignment before your meet with your trainer to review this competency.

Assignment 1: Read Matthew 18:15-20. Describe the steps outlined by Jesus for resolving an offense.

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Assignment 2: The first step that Carey offered for resolving conflict was "Own Your Part of The Conflict." With that in mind...

Step One: Think of a grievance you may have with another person. Consider in what part of the conflict you must "own," large or small.

Step Two: Spend some time in prayer alone with God asking for his forgiveness first. Then pray about how you will address this conflict.

Step Three: Initiate the necessary steps to resolve your conflict, no matter how difficult it may be.

## EVALUATE: A Time to Talk

To guide your conversation with your trainer, discuss your response to the following:

Why is dealing with conflict important in order for you to be able to lead others?

What is your typical reaction to personal conflict? Why do you think you respond the way you do?

- address it
- avoid it
- start it
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe a situation in which you experienced and/or witnessed a positive result from following biblical advice on handling conflict?

What is your typical reaction to conflict among other people? (e.g. within the church, at work, with family members or friends)

- try to negotiate peace among the parties
- listen to the gossip and rumors to decide what's true
- stay out of it
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

When it comes to ministry, conflict is often caused by misalignment with the church's mission, vision, values, and culture. How do you use vision to help resolve conflict in these scenarios?

*"Conflict is inevitable. Combat is optional."*

—Max Lucado

## Equip: A Time to Train Someone Else

Teaching something you've learned helps reinforce it in your mind. To further refine your own competency of **RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND CULTURE IN MIND**, share the general principles from this session with a friend or take another leader through this session. Be prepared to share your experience with your trainer the next time you meet.

# 7 Healthy Ways to Resolve Conflict At Church or Work

By Carey Nieuwhof ([careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com))

So you're dealing with a conflict and you're feeling some tension with someone you work with or someone you serve with at church.

Join the club.

But rather than let it linger, address it. The stakes are simply too high. I'm increasingly convinced many churches simply don't grow because they suffer from conflict and that many teams never thrive because there's simply too much tension.

What do you do?

Well, first realize you're not alone. In the United States, 70% of the people who go to work today will tell you they don't like their jobs. So many people I know get frustrated at work. And one of the top frustrations?

*The people they work with.*

Conflict happens wherever people gather: in families, in churches, at work and in communities at large.

I think Christians often struggle with conflict because:

In the name of grace, we feel we need to sacrifice truth.

When we speak truth, we often don't know how to speak it with grace.

We worry about hurting other people's feelings when one of the best things we can do is offer honest feedback.

We're not sure how to support someone we genuinely disagree with.

None of that needs to be.

I have learned, through trial and error, that these 7 strategies below can help me deal with conflict. I hope they can help you.

Here are 7 ways that I hope can help you resolve conflict:

## **1. Own your part of the conflict**

Conflict and even bad chemistry is almost never 100% one person's fault.

Thinking you're not part of the problem is often the problem.

One of the best expressions I've heard of how to figure out the extent to which you might be part of the problem is to ask a compelling question: What's it like to be on the other side of me?

Jeff Henderson asked that question in a great series at North Point Church called Climate Change.

Own what you can. What is it like to be on the other side of you? Ask some people.

## **2. Go direct**

Often issues are mishandled because we talk about someone rather than to someone.

Your co-worker at the water cooler isn't the problem, so why talk to him about it?

Jesus was crystal clear on how to handle conflict, but very few Christians follow his practice. In the name of being 'nice' ("I can't tell her that!"), we become ineffective.

Talk to the person you have the problem with. Directly. If you haven't got the courage to do it, maybe the problem isn't even big enough to worry about.

## **3. Believe the best about others**

It's easy to assign bad motives to people. Instead, give them the benefit of the doubt. They might not realize how they are coming across. Believe the best about others; don't assume the worst.

Believing the best can help you address an issue directly without ruining the relationship. It can turn hurtful into helpful. Here's an example: "Rachel, you might not realize this, but sometimes your emails can come across as demanding or even demeaning. I'm not sure you're aware of that, but I just wanted to let you know how they leave me feeling sometimes. I know you probably don't mean to do that."

That gives the person an out, and frankly, many times, they probably had no idea they were coming across negatively.

When you believe the best about others, you tend to get the best from others.

#### **4. Explain—don't blame**

How to talk to the person you're struggling with is where many people struggle.

And those conversations often go sideways because people begin with blame. Don't blame. Explain. Instead of saying "You always" or "You never" (which might be how you feel like starting), begin by talking about how you experience them.

If you're dealing with an 'angry person' for example, you might frame it this way: "Jake, I just want you to know that when you get upset in a meeting, it makes me feel like the discussion is over and I can't make a contribution." If you're dealing with gossip, try something like: "Ryan, on Tuesday when you told me what happened to Greg on the weekend, I felt like that was something Greg should have told me directly."

Do you hear the difference between explaining and blaming?

Blaming others is a guarantee that the only person who won't grow is you.

#### **5. Be specific**

Giving one or two specific incidents is much better than making general accusations or commenting on personality traits. "The other day in the meeting" or "In your email on the August numbers yesterday" is much more helpful than "You just always seem so frustrated."

The more specific you are, the more you de-escalate conflict and move toward a hopeful ending.

#### **6. Tell them you want things to get better**

What the person you're confronting needs is hope.

At this point, they probably feel defensive, ashamed and (hopefully) sorry.

Let them know the gifts they bring to the table and the good they do.

Tell them you are looking forward to the future and want things to work out.

#### **7. Pray for them**

I know this sounds trite, but it's not.

Don't pray about them. Pray for them.

It is almost impossible to stay angry with someone you pray for.

It can also give you empathy for them, and at least in your mind's eye, it places you both firmly at the foot of the cross in need of forgiveness. It will take any smirk of superiority out of your attitude, which goes a long way toward solving problems.

### **What Do You Think?**

Do these seven steps always result in a positive outcome? No. But I believe they will resolve the majority of cases in front of you in a very healthy way. At least they have for me. (This approach, by the way, is also effective at home and in most relationships in life.)

I don't get all 7 approaches right every time, but when I practice them, I find that conflict almost always resolves better.

COMPETENCY #3:

**CREATES CULTURE OF CONNECTING  
PEOPLE IN WAYS THAT BREAK DOWN  
WALLS AND BUILD TRUST**

## Competency + Character:

Remember, each competency should deepen your character, too.

*“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”*

Hebrews 13:1-2

Rewrite this verse in your own words below:

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What principle does this verse teach?

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How does it apply to your life right now?

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## Profile: What This Looks Like in Real Life

You realize that there is never a person you lock eyes with that does not matter to God. At church and in social settings, you are especially aware of people who are shy, timid, and/or uncertain of themselves or their surroundings. You make the effort to speak to these individuals, introduce yourself, put them at ease, and make them feel valued. You have a “customer service” mindset.

## EXPLORE: A Time to Think

**Resources (click the links below or refer to pp. 24-28):**

[“Connecting With New People Right Away” \(wikihow.com\)](#)

[“Ten Ways to Have A Better Conversation” by Celeste Headlee \(Ted Talk\)](#)

Whether you want to connect with people socially, make a great first impression, or to build connections for work, it can be a bit intimidating to find ways to bond with people, at first. However, if you focus on showing that you really care about the person you’re talking to, make some meaningful conversation, or work on making people feel comfortable, then you’ll be on your way to connecting with anybody without a hitch.

As you read and watch, reflect on and journal your answers to the following questions. Prepare to share your responses with your trainer.

What stood out to you the most?

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What challenged your thinking the most?

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In what area(s) do you most need to grow and what action step(s) will you take?

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What area(s) of strength these readings affirm for you personally?

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## EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try

The following exercise is designed to help reinforce the principles you are learning about this competency. Complete the assignment before your meet with your trainer to review this competency.

Assignment: Each of the next two Sundays at church, initiate three conversations with someone new with the aim of making them comfortable and finding a way to serve them. Pay attention to how this made you feel, how they responded, and what you learned. (NOTE: You may need to come a few minutes early or hang around following service.)

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## EVALUATE: A Time to Talk

To guide your conversation with your trainer, discuss your response to the following:

Do you consider yourself more of an extrovert or an introvert? How does your wiring affect connecting with people and creating a culture of connecting?

What reasons cause people to put up relational “walls,” especially at church? What are some ways you can proactively break down those walls?

Describe a time when someone else made you feel at ease in an unfamiliar or potentially uneasy environment.

The tendency for most people (perhaps you, too) is to gravitate toward and talk to people they know. When you are serving and leading in ministry, what are some ways to politely disengage from those you know in order to connect new people and create a culture of connecting?

*“Love without conversation is impossible.”*

—Mortimer Adler

## Equip: A Time to Train Someone Else

Teaching something you’ve learned helps reinforce it in your mind. To further refine your own competency of **CREATING A CULTURE OF CONNECTING PEOPLE IN WAYS THAT BREAK DOWN WALLS AND BUILD TRUST**, share the general principles from this session with a friend or take another leader through this session. Be prepared to share your experience with your trainer the next time you meet.

# Connecting With People Right Away

From [wikihow.com](https://www.wikihow.com)

**1 Smile and make eye contact.** If you want to connect with someone immediately, then smiling and making eye contact, which go in hand, are absolutely key as you introduce yourself and start the conversation. Research has proven that smiling is actually contagious, and your smile will make the person more likely to smile and to be open to you. Sustained eye contact can make the person feel like you really care about what he or she has to say and can make him or her much more likely to like you.

- Though you can break eye contact occasionally so the conversation doesn't feel too intense, you don't want the person to think you have other things on your mind.
- You can practice smiling at people just when you're walking by them so you're more likely to radiate positive energy.

**2 Use the person's name.** Using a person's name can make that person feel important—or at least important enough for you to remember his or her name. Just saying something like, "It was great to meet you, Amy," at the end of the conversation can really make the person feel much more connected to you. There's nothing that will make a person feel more insignificant than saying, "What was your name again?" or "I just can't seem to ever remember your name..." and if you really want to connect with new people, then you should not only remember their names, but use them.

- Don't use the fact that you have a supposedly terrible memory as an excuse. If you really want to immediately connect with people, then you should make a real effort to remember their names.

**3 Have open body language.** Your body language can help you look more approachable and more open, which will instantly make people like you more. If you want a new person to connect with you immediately, then you should turn your body toward that person, stand tall, avoid fidgeting or crossing your arms over your face, and direct your energy toward that person without coming on too strong.

- If you're turned away from the person, fold your arms over your chest, or slouch, then the person will feel like you're really not interested in what he or she has to say.

**4 Don't underestimate the value of good small talk.** You may think that small talk is meaningless and only meant for people who want to make superficial connections, but making good small talk will actually allow you to make real connections and build toward deeper relationships with people. When you start connecting with people you know, you don't talk about the meaning of life or how your life was affected by your grandmother's death right away; you first ease into a more serious relationship by talking about lighthearted subjects and getting to know people little by little. Here are some tips for making great small talk:

- Use simple topics to transition into deeper conversation. You can casually comment that there was perfect weather over the weekend and then ask your conversational partner whether he did anything fun to take advantage of it.
- Ask questions that are open-ended instead of ones that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" to keep the conversation going.
- Notice your environment. If you see a flyer for an awesome concert on campus, you can ask the person you're talking to whether he's going or what he thinks of the band.
- Keep things lighthearted. You don't want to turn someone off by talking about dark or intense topics too soon.

**5 Make the person feel special as soon as you can.** Though you don't need to shower the person with endless praise, just making a small comment that makes the person see that you think he or she is impressive or interesting in some way as soon as you can will definitely help you connect with new people. At the end of the day, all people want is to feel special. Here are some casual comments you can make to make the person feel special right away:

- "I'm so impressed that you wrote an entire novel. I can't imagine doing that."
- "It's amazing that you can speak three languages."
- "I feel like we've met before. It's so easy to talk to you."
- "You have such a unique laugh. It's contagious."

**6 Ask questions.** Another way to get a person to like you right away is to focus on being interested instead of interesting. Though you can try to impress the person by being utterly fascinating or entertaining, it's much easier to show a genuine interest in the person and to show that you actually care about who the person is and what he has to offer to the world. Though you don't need to make it seem like an interrogation, just a few simple well-timed questions can make the person much more likely to connect with you. Here are some things you can ask about:

- The person's hobbies or interests
- The person's favorite bands
- The person's favorite things to do in town
- The person's pets
- The person's weekend plans

**7 Keep things positive.** People like to feel happy and upbeat more than they like to feel sad or upset; it's only logical that people are much more likely to connect with you and to want to spend more time around you if you keep things positive and work on talking about the things that excite you and make you happy. Though everyone likes to complain, you should focus on being positive and complaining a bit when you know the person, if you really need to. You want to send off positive energy that makes other people feel more positive around you; this will make it much easier for you to connect with people than being sad or angry the whole time.

- If you catch yourself making a negative comment, try to counter it with two positive comments so people still think of you as upbeat.
- This doesn't mean you have to change your entire personality or fool anyone. It just means that you should focus on the good things in your life when you meet new people if you want them to remember you fondly.

**8 Show that you've been listening.** Taking the time to really listen to people can be one of the best ways to make them connect with you right away. When a new person talks to you, make sure you really hear what the person is saying instead of interrupting or waiting for your turn to speak; once the person is done talking, respond in a way that shows you've really taken everything the person has said into account. This will make the person feel much more connected to you.

- If you bring up something the person said earlier in the conversation, the person will feel really impressed. Most people feel like people don't hear them out enough, and if you can show that you're really listening, you'll be making a great impression.

# 10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation

By Celeste Headlee (TED Talk)

**Number one: Don't multitask.** And I don't mean just set down your cell phone or your tablet or your car keys or whatever is in your hand. I mean, be present. Be in that moment. Don't think about your argument you had with your boss. Don't think about what you're going to have for dinner. If you want to get out of the conversation, get out of the conversation, but don't be half in it and half out of it.

**Number two: Don't pontificate.** If you want to state your opinion without any opportunity for response or argument or pushback or growth, write a blog.

You need to enter every conversation assuming that you have something to learn. The famed therapist M. Scott Peck said that true listening requires a setting aside of oneself. And sometimes that means setting aside your personal opinion. He said that sensing this acceptance, the speaker will become less and less vulnerable and more and more likely to open up the inner recesses of his or her mind to the listener. Again, assume that you have something to learn.

Bill Nye: "Everyone you will ever meet knows something that you don't." I put it this way: Everybody is an expert in something.

**Number three: Use open-ended questions.** In this case, take a cue from journalists. Start your questions with who, what, when, where, why or how. If you put in a complicated question, you're going to get a simple answer out. If I ask you, "Were you terrified?" you're going to respond to the most powerful word in that sentence, which is "terrified," and the answer is "Yes, I was" or "No, I wasn't." "Were you angry?" "Yes, I was very angry." Let them describe it. They're the ones that know. Try asking them things like, "What was that like?" "How did that feel?" Because then they might have to stop for a moment and think about it, and you're going to get a much more interesting response.

**Number four: Go with the flow.** That means thoughts will come into your mind and you need to let them go out of your mind. We've heard interviews often in which a guest is talking for several minutes and then the host comes back in and asks a question which seems like it comes out of nowhere, or it's already been answered. That means the host probably stopped listening two minutes ago because he thought of this really clever question, and he was just bound and determined to say that. And we do the exact same thing. We're sitting there having a conversation with someone, and then we remember that time that we met Hugh Jackman in a coffee shop.

**Number five: If you don't know, say that you don't know.** Now, people on the radio, especially on NPR, are much more aware that they're going on the record, and so they're more careful about what they claim to be an expert in and what they claim to know for sure. Do that. Err on the side of caution. Talk should not be cheap.

**Number six: Don't equate your experience with theirs.** If they're talking about having lost a family member, don't start talking about the time you lost a family member. If they're talking about the trouble they're having at work, don't tell them about how much you hate your job. It's not the same. It is never the same. All experiences are individual. And, more importantly, it is not about you. You don't need to take that moment to prove how amazing you are or how much you've suffered. Somebody asked Stephen Hawking once what his IQ was, and he said, "I have no idea. People who brag about their IQs are losers."

**Number seven: Try not to repeat yourself.** It's condescending, and it's really boring, and we tend to do it a lot. Especially in work conversations or in conversations with our kids, we have a point to make, so we just keep rephrasing it over and over. Don't do that.

**Number eight: Stay out of the weeds.** Frankly, people don't care about the years, the names, the dates, all those details that you're struggling to come up with in your mind. They don't care. What they care about is you. They care about what you're like, what you have in common. So forget the details. Leave them out.

**Number nine: Listen.** I cannot tell you how many really important people have said that listening is perhaps the most, the number one most important skill that you could develop. Buddha said, and I'm paraphrasing, "If your mouth is open, you're not learning." And Calvin Coolidge said, "No man ever listened his way out of a job."

Why do we not listen to each other? Number one, we'd rather talk. When I'm talking, I'm in control. I don't have to hear anything I'm not interested in. I'm the center of attention. I can bolster my own identity. But there's another reason: We get distracted. The average person talks at about 225 words per minute, but we can listen at up to 500 words per minute. So our minds are filling in those other 275 words. And look, I know, it takes effort and energy to actually pay attention to someone, but if you can't do that, you're not in a conversation. You're just two people shouting out barely related sentences in the same place. You have to listen to one another. Stephen Covey said it very beautifully. He said, "Most of us don't listen with the intent to understand. We listen with the intent to reply."

**Number 10: Be brief.**

COMPETENCY #4:

**ENCOURAGES OTHERS PERSONALLY  
AND RELATIONALLY**

## Competency + Character:

Remember, each competency should deepen your character, too.

*“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”*

Hebrews 3:13

Rewrite this verse in your own words below:

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What principle does this verse teach? What exactly does it mean to “encourage?”

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How does it apply to your life right now?

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## Profile: What This Looks Like in Real Life

You take to heart Proverbs 10:11, “The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.” You recognize the powerful impact that encouragement has on others and look for ways to regularly speak words of encouragement. You are intentional about looking for ways to encourage your team/group collectively and individually. You are a person whose words and actions add value to others.

## EXPLORE: A Time to Think

**Resource (click the link below or refer to pp. 33-34):**

**[“The Anatomy of Encouragement”](#) by Mac Lake (maclakeonline.com)**

Encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem, or galvanize an individual’s resolve to continue in the face of difficulty. To help add some punch to our words of praise, pastor and church planting expert, Mac Lake, explores the anatomy of effective encouragement.

As you read, reflect on and journal your answers to the following questions. Prepare to share your responses with your trainer.

What stood out to you the most?

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What challenged your thinking the most?

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In what area(s) do you most need to grow and what action step(s) will you take?

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What area(s) of strength these readings affirm for you personally?

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## EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try

The following exercise is designed to help reinforce the principles you are learning about this competency. Complete the assignment before your meet with your trainer to review this competency.

Assignment: Practice giving encouragement to at least three people using the principles you learned in this article: 1) a family member, 2) a co-worker or friend, and 3) a member of your ministry team/group. Take note of how each person responds. What did you do well? What could you do better? How comfortable were you giving the encouragement? Come prepared to share your experience and what you are learning.

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## EVALUATE: A Time to Talk

To guide your conversation with your trainer, discuss your response to the following:

What barriers make it difficult for some leaders to give this type of intentional, focused encouragement? Are there any barriers with which you struggle?

Have you ever received the type of encouragement described in the article you read? If so, how did it make you feel? Why?

Who do you know that best exemplifies the principles in this article? What makes him or her such a great encourager?

*"If you are a leader, you should never forget that everyone needs encouragement. And everyone who receives it—young or old, successful or less-than-successful, unknown or famous—is changed by it."*

—John Maxwell

## Equip: A Time to Train Someone Else

Teaching something you've learned helps reinforce it in your mind. To further refine your own competency of ENCOURAGING OTHERS PERSONALLY AND RELATIONALLY, share the general principles from this session with a friend or take another leader through this session. Be prepared to share your experience with your trainer the next time you meet.

# The Anatomy of Encouragement

By Mac Lake (maclakeonline.com)

*The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.* – Proverbs 10:11

We've all had that moment where we were impressed with someone's performance and felt the urge to give them a word of encouragement. Then, as we open our mouth the only thing that comes out is, "Hey you did a great job tonight" or "Thanks for your leadership, that was good today." While I'm sure they appreciate the praise, think of how much more powerful it could be if we simply put some thought and intention into our encouragement.

Encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem or galvanize an individual's resolve to continue in the face of difficulty. So think about it, do your encouraging words have power or are they just ineffectual comments? Years ago, Larry Crabb wrote an entire book titled, *Encouragement: The Key to Caring*. A whole book on encouragement! There's a lot we can learn about this simple yet influential leadership skill.

Perhaps the key to putting a punch to our praise is looking at the anatomy of effective encouragement. While there is much more to it, here are three simple ingredients to get you started.

**Sincere** – Before speaking words of encouragement check your motives and make sure you're doing it to lift up the other individual, not to gain something for yourself. Solomon warns us in Proverbs 26:28, "a flattering mouth works ruin." The Hebrew word for ruin comes from a root word meaning, "to push, drive away or cast down." If we're not careful insincere words can have an opposite effect we desire, pushing people away rather than building them up. I was having lunch with a young man one day who continued to sing my praises throughout the whole hour. While I'm always up for a dose of encouragement, I found it strange because he had never met me. His words were pleasant, yet I found myself pushed away from him rather than drawn to him. Encouragement is always best served with a spirit of sincerity.

**Specific** – If you want your words of praise to have more punch then be specific with your encouragement. Notice the specifics of what people do well and consider how it impacted you personally. Performance is good for a reason and if we look close enough we can find little nuances that made it special. Many evenings Cindy and I watch The Food Network, and I'm always fascinated at how much detail feedback the judges give about the look, taste and flavors of each dish. They're able to praise or critique each chef with great detail because they've acquired a sensitive palate that enables them to taste flavors the average person doesn't notice. In the same way we

must look for and praise the specific detail of an individual's work. That takes encouragement to a very deep and meaningful level. So instead of saying, "Hey you did a good job." You can say, "When you lead the small group discussion tonight you really asked insightful questions that challenged my thinking in new ways. You have a real gift for making people think. I appreciate you using that gift to add value to my spiritual walk." Specific encouragement is meaningful encouragement.

**Strength-Focused** – God has gifted each of us in very specific ways. Each day we use and develop those strengths. Over time as those strengths develop they become obvious to others. Paul had been around young Timothy so much that he became very familiar with his strengths. And then in a very crucial time in Timothy's ministry Paul told him, "Fan into flame the gifts God has given you." By giving someone encouragement centered on their particular strength, we are in essence helping them fan the flame of their strengths. Giving someone sincere, specific encouragement that is focused on their unique strengths helps them learn something new about themselves and deepens their wisdom about using that particular strength. I've always said that encouragement is one of the most overlooked leadership development tools available to us.

Encouragement is one of those small investments that we can make daily that will bring a huge return. Solomon observed, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." (Prov. 25:11) The right word, spoken the right way, at the right time can impact lives in ways we may never know. So what are you waiting on...give an intentional word of encouragement today!

COMPETENCY #5:

**IDENTIFIES AND ENGAGES EMERGING  
LEADERS**

## Competency + Character:

Remember, each competency should deepen your character, too.

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”*

John 15:16

Rewrite this verse in your own words below:

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What principle does this verse teach?

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How does it apply to your life right now?

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## Profile: What This Looks Like in Real Life

You look beyond the surface and see potential in people. You are not threatened by other people’s leadership potential; rather you realize that identifying other leaders in your area make you a better leader and makes the church more effective in its mission. You make the effort to include potential leaders when you make decisions or carry out leadership responsibilities. You identify potential leaders for development and engage them.

## EXPLORE: A Time to Think

**Resource (click the link below or refer to pp. 39-41):**

**[“Seven Ways to Identify Leaders Among Your Employees”](#)**

**by Andrew Cravenho (fastcompany.com)**

An organization needs to put a structured plan in place for leadership continuity. For that to happen, it needs to zero in on individuals who have leadership potential. This ongoing task needs to be an essential component of Relevant’s growth strategy.

As you read, reflect on and journal your answers to the following questions. Prepare to share your responses with your trainer.

What stood out to you the most?

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What challenged your thinking the most?

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In what area(s) do you most need to grow and what action step(s) will you take?

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What area(s) of strength these readings affirm for you personally?

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## EXPERIENCE: A Time to Try

The following exercise is designed to help reinforce the principles you are learning about this competency. Complete the assignment before your meet with your trainer to review this competency.

Assignment: Make a list of every person on your team or in your group. Put a "+" beside each person you feel has the "potential" to move up a step into leadership. These does not mean they are ready "now," nor does it guarantee that they will be asked to become a leader; it simply means you see leadership potential in them. Be prepared to discuss this list with your trainer.

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## EVALUATE: A Time to Talk

To guide your conversation with your trainer, discuss your response to the following:

Jesus saw potential in twelve young men that he called to follow him. Among them were people from all walks of life. Discuss the contrast between the following two disciples in particular, and why you think Jesus may have chosen both of them (NOTE: Consider doing some basic research on these two disciples of Jesus):

### PETER

Fisherman  
Demonstrated great faith  
Called "Satan" by Jesus  
Denied Jesus  
Launched the Church

### JUDAS

Advocated giving to the poor  
Dishonest money manager  
Possessed by Satan  
Betrayed Jesus  
Hung himself

What are some qualities that suggest to you a person may have leadership potential? Are these qualities you see in the list you made above?

What are some ways you can intentionally involve some "potential" leaders in sharing leadership with you?

*"Leadership is unlocking people's potential to become better."*  
—Bill Bradley

## Equip: A Time to Train Someone Else

Teaching something you've learned helps reinforce it in your mind. To further refine your own competency of IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING EMERGING LEADERS, share the general principles from this session with a friend or take another leader through this session. Be prepared to share your experience with your trainer the next time you meet.

# 7 Ways to Identify Leaders Among Your Employees

By Andrew Cravenho (fastcompany.com)

Recognizing tomorrow's leaders today is vital for your company's long-term success. Therefore, an organization needs to put a structured plan in place for leadership continuity. For that to happen, it needs to zero in on individuals who have leadership potential. This ongoing task needs to be an essential component of an organization's growth strategy.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Leaders are change agents who play a transformational role in an organization's efforts to overcome market challenges. If your organization faces a leadership vacuum at any given point in time, then it will be unable to achieve its growth targets.

To demonstrate your organization's commitment toward innovation and high-quality products and services, you need leaders who have the authority and credibility needed to push the workforce to meet this goal.

You need to find leaders from inside your organization because they are well versed with the processes, systems, organization structure, and work culture already in place. They are also aware of the organization's strengths—and, more importantly, weaknesses. This allows them to take better and more informed growth-oriented decisions.

Let's face it: The root of every successful business is timely decision-making. If you don't have the leaders to make such decisions, then your business will flounder.

How do you go about finding leaders from within your organization?

## 1. FOCUS ON HIGH POTENTIAL—NOT PERFORMANCE

Employee performance defines ability and expertise. It is a parameter you must keep in mind to identify a leader, but look beyond performance. What you also need to look for is the employee's aptitude, desire to grow, and overall potential.

Some individuals are not cut out to be leaders, although their performance is at the higher end of the scale. They don't have the capacity to play leadership roles, and are content to be followers. This is why potential should outweigh performance as a parameter when zeroing in on a possible future leader.

## 2. NOTE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

An individual must feel invested in a company's goals and should see his professional achievements through the prism of company growth.

Ask yourself: "Does the employee proactively make suggestions for process improvement, or show interest in going beyond his/her brief to achieve tangible results for the organization?" If the answer is yes, then you have probably identified an employee who has the makings of a future leader.

### **3. CATALYST OR WATCHER?**

You'll find people in your organization who make things happen—those who make decisions necessary to take projects to their logical conclusion—while others prefer to watch and wait for things to happen before they are sucked into proceedings. The former have "leader" written all over them. They facilitate project completion by becoming an integral part of the decision-making process.

### **4. ARE THEY ACCOUNTABLE?**

Employees who hold themselves answerable for failure can be identified as leaders. If you see individuals shying away from taking responsibility for their actions because it might reflect poorly on them, then they aren't leader material. Leaders aren't afraid to hold themselves accountable for failure.

### **5. OBSERVE MULTITASKING ABILITIES**

If you think you've identified potential leaders among your workforce, give them some extra responsibilities. Throw them in at the deep end and keep tabs on how they swim. Can they handle the extra tasks you've assigned, or are they finding it difficult to multitask?

The answer to this question is important because all leaders have to perform more than one task at a time and perform it to the best of their abilities.

### **6. EVIDENCE OF EMPATHY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

- Is the individual a good team player?
- Does he or she help others? Or put others before themselves?
- Does he or she take time to interact with other employees?
- Does the employee focus on building personal relationships?
- Is the employee a people person?

If the answer to these questions is an unequivocal yes, then you know you've identified a selfless person who gives due weight to personal bonding. He or she has the ability to constructively use understanding of people for the benefit of the organization.

## **7. REMARKABLE COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

All leaders have extraordinary communication skills. If they want to get a particular point across to the people under their watch, they are able to do it effortlessly. Look for a person who has the ability to explain ideas in a clear and concise manner; somebody who deals with specifics and who has the ability to listen.

If you are able to identify an employee who has these qualities and more, you need to start prepping this person for a leadership role in your organization.

# NOTES