



Inspire the Right Trust

A Leader's First Job

Introduction

Are you managing or are you leading, and how do you know which is which? The big idea that transforms a manager into a leader, in fact, the defining skill that does that is the act of extending trust. To extend trust to others in a smart way is the differentiator between management and leadership.

Management vs. Leadership

We need good management and we also need good leadership, so this is not an either-or dilemma. Management is all about efficiency, that is, doing things right. Leadership is about effectiveness, that is, doing the right things. Leadership is all about navigating and leading change and the change that's happening all around us.

In effect, management supervises, if you will, whereas leadership extends trust, and that is the defining skill that transforms a manager into a leader: the act of extending trust, to lead out and extend trust to others and to do it in a smart way. The very first job of any leader is to inspire trust. But the second job of that leader is to extend trust.

If you want to be trusted, you've got to give trust. You've got to give it to get it because there's reciprocity to trust, and that's what leaders do. Let's define trust for our purpose. It's

just a very simple definition. We might define trust as confidence; in fact, trust and confidence are the exact same word in many languages and cultures around the world. So, let's look at the opposite of trust. The opposite of trust is distrust, or suspicion.

What makes a person trustworthy or credible is that they have both character and competence. If they have one but lack the other, they won't sustain trust.

Smart Trust

Leadership needs to extend smart trust, which is the good judgment between the extremes of blind trust, where we trust too much, and distrust, where we don't trust at all. Smart trust is a third alternative, a way of being able to maximize the dividends of high trust while minimizing the risk.

Five Actions to Extend Trust

There are five actions that leaders take to inspire and extend trust to others.

1. Believe in Trust

The first action of smart trust in a leader is that they choose

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to believe in trust. They choose to believe that operating with trust and extending trust is a better way to lead.

2. Start with Yourself

The second action meant for any leader who leads out and extends trust is that they start with themselves. They look in the mirror first. They ask and answer these two questions:

- First, do I trust myself?
- And second, do I give to others a leader they can trust?

3. Intent: Declare and Assume

The third action has two halves. The first half: Declare your intent. That is, you need to tell people what you're doing and why. Always give the "why." The "why" is vital. Tell them your agenda, and tell them your motive as well as what you're trying to do. Give that "why" behind the "what."

The second half of this action is to assume positive intent in others, that is, you assume the best first; you need to start with the best in others. That, in a sense, is also extending trust to other people as a starting point until they prove otherwise.

4. Do What You Say You'll Do

The fourth action requires leaders to do what they say they're going to do. Declare your intended actions, and then do them. You do what you say you're going to do. It's that simple.

5. Lead Out and Extend Trust

All of this really leads us to the fifth action, which is the critical action, and it's the main point. Everything leads up to this, and that is the intentional act of leading out and extending trust to others. This is the act of leadership. This is what's vital. Now why? Because of the reciprocity of trust; when you give it, people receive it and return it. But if you withhold trust

from others, they withhold trust from you.

Smart Trust: Your Heart and Your Head

Someone needs to go first: That's what leaders do. Leaders go first. They lead out and extend trust to others in a smart manner. They trust their people, and they do it smartly. So, smart trust is the good judgment that flows from having both a high propensity to trust balanced by equally high analysis.

What is your propensity to trust? It flows from your heart. It's your willingness, your bias, your tendency to trust others. You want that to be high. That opens you up to possibilities. But you also want to balance that with equally high analysis. Analysis is where we wisely assess three vital variables:

1. The situation, the opportunity, that is, the job to be done. What is it that I'm sending trust to? What am I trusting them with?
2. Second, what's the risk involved?
3. Third, what's the credibility of the people involved?

So, assess the three variables of situation, risk and credibility. That critical analysis flows from your head.

Conclusion

Smart trust is a blending of heart with head, but you've got to start with the heart. You've got to start with your propensity to trust.

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