



## **Leading With Spirit!**

### ***Taking Your People Up One Step at a Time***

Only great leaders raise other leaders. Leadership guru, John Maxwell says that there is no success without a successor. I was inspired several years ago by a leader named Joe Bonura who saw potential in me and volunteered to pour himself into me. He has mentored me step by step through the years to always go to the next level. His only requirement (and fee) was that when I become successful, that I pour myself into someone else. I now mentor a select few who have been willing to stay focused and follow several simple requirements. But not everyone is willing to pay the price. Not only that, I've found that as I have talked with other executives, most don't know the process for raising other leaders to a higher level. Here are 9 steps to lift others around you that will in turn lift you to a higher level as a leader.

1. Live your life on a higher level. Larry Huch says, "You can't take people where you haven't been." In my newsletter I featured a humorous book about 50 jobs that are "worse than yours." The worst job listed was Shirpa – you know, the guides who take climbers to the summit of Mt. Everest. It is got its rank as the worst, most dangerous job because of the high death rate. But wouldn't it be great if you were remembered for dying while trying to take others to a higher level? What great cause are you committed to? What are you dying to do? We will re-visit that later.

When you come back to take others up, tell them where you have been with excitement. No one wants to follow another to a dull place. Tell them they can go to so you won't come across as arrogant or aloof. Tell them you will go up with them and that together you can make it to the summit. No one wants to go it alone. I recently entered into an exciting partnership with well known Professional Development Coach Lisa Yakobi. She helps me in Professional Development; I help her in Business Coaching. One of our guarantees is that we will share our mutual success so that one doesn't make it to the next level without taking the other.

2. Give your Leaders permission to go to a higher level. Do the people in your organization have your permission to succeed? Are you their leader or are you their lid, keeping them from going to a higher level? Do you know how they train fleas to stay in the small confines of a flea circus box? They put the fleas in a jar and place a lid on it. The fleas are conditioned to jump no higher than just below the lid to avoid pain. After 24

hours they take the lid off. It is safe to do so, because the fleas have been conditioned to never jump higher than just below the height of the lid <i>for the rest of their lives</i>. What "lids," or limits, have you put over the heads of the people in your organization?

How do you give them permission? First, expect them to do better. Raise their level of requirements to succeed. Tell them you expect them to do better. Verbalize your expectations and goals you have for them. Hire people to work themselves out of their job by mentoring, training or equipping another to take their place one day. Reinforce it constantly to them with motivational stories, vision-casting, praising them publicly and rewarding them financially. Demand excellence of your leaders. Go from giving permission to making it their responsibility to go to the next level. Only insecure leaders fear success in their subordinates.

3. Take your Leaders where they can't go on their own. Be someone who adds something to life. In his great networking book, *Never Eat Alone*, Keith Ferrazzi says that you should always be increasing your circle of influence to build your network. What do you do to practice daily encouragement? How do you become the bright spot in someone's room? When are you going to start? Are you "eating alone?"

Yes it can be scary. But most people need to be lead to the next level by someone willing to take them there. Make a commitment to take everyone to a higher level. Have as your mantra, "If you are a 3, I will make you a 4." "If you are a 7, I will make you an 8." If you are only a 1, I will do my best to make you a 2."

4. Expose your Leaders to higher level experiences. What are they? Higher level experiences are those that take people out of their comfort zones. They put us in a position of growth and move us to a higher level of living. As you change people's attitudes you will change their altitudes and they will go to higher levels of leadership and life. In a *60 Minutes* interview about ten years ago, a mountain climbing guide was being interviewed about his experiences. The host asked him why anyone would risk their life to go through the hardships and almost certain death in many instances of the climb. The guide answered, "Obviously, you've never been to the top."

How do you give your leaders experiences? Here are four important tools:

- Books
- Tapes/CD's
- Conferences/Seminars
- Successful People

Remember, birds of a feather flock together. Position your people in an environment where they can't help but be successful. Don't just attend higher level events alone. Take your "mentees" with you.

The best wisdom is given from the summit. The famous Sermon on the Mount in the Bible was not given to the masses, but only addressed to those disciples who climbed up

the mountain with Jesus. Cast vision that you will reward your followers with pearls that they only receive by going up with you. Buy books that help you succeed, then give them away to someone else who will benefit from them. If nothing else, it will clean off your dusty bookshelves (Hint: if you aren't successful and you need a full bookshelf for the image, it isn't working).

5. Show your Leaders things they can't see on their own. Most of us need a regular dose of encouragement. However all too often we don't get it from the ones we need it from the most: peers, family and most of all our own leaders. Insecure leaders won't encourage or reveal the success they see in their staff because they fear them. Johann von Goethe said, "Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be."

You should always allow your leaders and staff to see your perspective on the future. Help them "buy in" to your vision by showing them your insight. People can go to the next level if someone who is already there reaches back and gives them a lift up. What are you doing to pull your people up to your level? This will allow you to move higher as they take on more responsibility that you have had to deal with in the time prior.

6. Give your Leaders things they can't get on their own. This speaks to your spiritual nature most. When you give away your time, your knowledge, your talents, it blesses you and allows room for more new things to fill your life. Leaders who want to grow need to cultivate an attitude of generosity. To do so, you need to be grateful to those who have helped you (learn to write "Thank you" notes), and have a generosity plan. Plan ways you will give to those you want to move to the next level. I've heard it said many times before that you have to give up, to go up.

Generosity will not only elevate your life and those around you, it will break your addiction to materialism. It will let you see that things are just things and the real legacy you leave will be the lives you have touched and the worlds you have changed by your actions. I heard a speaker last month say that in a survey of lottery winners conducted one year after their windfall of money, none felt they were better off, or truly happy. That is why many successful, wealthy people find true happiness in what they give to others rather than the material possessions they have. Fifty years from now how would you like to be remembered? By the material possessions you had, or those that followed in your path to greatness? What are you willing to give up so you may go up?

7. Relieve the burdens of your Leaders. First, though, you need to unload your own burdens. Purposefully take all the negativity out of your life. It is a weight holding you down and keeping you from ascending to higher levels of performance and productivity. Once you do this you are in a position to focus on others. As you ruthlessly rid your life of negativity you need to help your people do the same. You can't hold a man down without staying down with him. There are three main burdens that you need to rid yourself of and those you are mentoring:

A. Yesterday's failures. Put the past behind you. Teach your Leaders to get over it (everyone else did). Teach them to learn from their failures and not to dwell on them. Everyone will fail over and over again in life. Successful leaders learn from their failures and move to the next level.

B. Today's successes. What have you don't lately? If it is a success it can totally derail you and get you off your path. The hardest time in sales to make the next call is immediately after a success. You just want to enjoy it and quit for the day. But my personal coach has taught me that success is the greatest time to get back on the phone and make more calls.

C. Tomorrow's fears. Jesus said, "Tomorrow will take care of itself." If you are well prepared today you will be better prepared for tomorrow. I have a friend that I mentor and she fears striking out on her own to build her business. I tell her she will not achieve the degree of success she wishes until she initiates her plan. John Ortberg says, "If you want to walk on water you have to step out of the boat."

8. Have a passion to lift people. The best People Builders are those who possess a passion to see others succeed. They don't have to be great teachers, just be willing to pass along the wisdom from their experiences to those who thirst for knowledge. You can sense it when they come alive as they tell their story of success and failure. They do it excitedly but also with humility in that they want to impart their experience for the sake of the other person, not for their own glory.

The passion to lift is a gift, a talent to help. If you have a giftedness like the person you want to lift to a higher level then like will beget like. Leaders who have a passion for lifting know how to spot the desire and ability to succeed in others. They know how to focus on others and diligently search for this "seed" in those they want to lift. They look for gifts, effectiveness, opportunity, enthusiasm, temperament style and, yes, passion in those they seek to mentor.

9. Stay connected with your Leaders. Using the mountain climbing example from earlier, this is the rope that connects climbers. You should be at least one step ahead of your people but not so many steps ahead that you are mistaken for the enemy and become a martyr for the cause. Remember General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, the Confederate military commander? He was mistaken for a Union soldier and shot by one of his own sentries while on a night patrol. He became a martyr for the Southern cause and never lived out his full potential.

Great leaders keep connected with their people on both an emotional level by being transparent before their followers (People won't journey with others that they don't respect), and a relational level by being with them at every step of the way (Larry Huch says, "Too many shepherds don't smell like sheep anymore"). What activities are you doing that keep you connected with your people on both levels? Do they feel like you are with them and they with you, or do you sense a distance in the relationship?

Commit now to be a People Builder. Invest in your own legacy by investing in those who will carry it on long after you are out of the picture. Too many businesses fail because

there is no succession plan. There is no success without a successor in place to take over. Make your plan and start exercising it today.

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**Jim Mathis, CSP is an international Certified Speaking Professional, executive coach and trainer. To subscribe to his free personal and professional development newsletter, please send an email to: [subscribe@jimmathis.com](mailto:subscribe@jimmathis.com) with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject. An electronic copy will be sent out to you every month. For more information on how Jim and his programs can benefit your organization or group, please call 888-688-0220, or visit his web site: [www.jimmathis.com](http://www.jimmathis.com).**