

want to lead across, you need to work for and win your peers' permission. That can be a great challenge, but it is definitely one worth accepting.

SECTION IV

THE PRINCIPLES 360-DEGREE LEADERS PRACTICE TO LEAD ACROSS

“Follow me, I’ll walk with you.”

What distinguishes a merely competent leader from one who goes to the next level? Competent leaders can lead followers. They can find, gather, recruit, and enlist them. This is no easy task, but a leader who can lead only followers is limited. To make it to the next level of leadership, a leader must be able to lead other leaders—not just those below them, but also those above and alongside them.

Leaders who work really hard and exhibit very high competence can influence their bosses. So in that respect, they have become leaders of leaders. But leading peers is another kind of challenge. In fact, for highly productive people who create feelings of jealousy or resentment because of their relationship with their bosses, leading peers can be especially difficult. If the leaders in the middle who lead up are seen as political or as brownnosers, then their peers may reject any overtures toward leading across.

To succeed as a 360-Degree Leader who leads peer-to-peer, you have to work at giving your colleagues reasons to respect and follow you. How do you do that? By helping your peers win. If you can help them win, you will not only help the organization but will also help yourself.

The people who find it most difficult to lead across are those who don’t excel at building relationships. If you look back at the Five Levels of Leadership in “The Position Myth,” you’ll see that after the first level, which is position, the second and third levels are permission and production. Leaders who excel at production but neglect permission may be able to influence their bosses, but they will have a nearly impossible time trying to influence their peers. If you

Lead-Across Principle #1

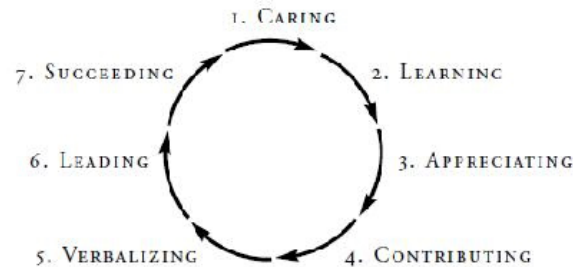
UNDERSTAND, PRACTICE, AND COMPLETE THE LEADERSHIP LOOP

Many people who have difficulty leading across have trouble because their approach is too shortsighted. They try to gain influence too quickly. Leading is not a one-time event; it's an ongoing process that takes time—especially with peers.

If you want to gain influence and credibility with people working alongside you, then don't try to take shortcuts or cheat the process. Instead, learn to understand, practice, and complete the leadership loop with them.

THE LEADERSHIP LOOP

Take a look at the following graphic, which will give you an idea of what the leadership loop looks like:



You can see that it's a cycle that starts with caring and ends with succeeding. Here's how each of these steps in the loop works.

1. CARING—TAKE AN INTEREST IN PEOPLE

This may sound too simple, but it really all starts here. You have to show people that you care about them by taking an interest in them. Many leaders are so action oriented and agenda driven that they don't make people a high enough priority. If that describes you, then you need to turn that around.

I don't mean to sound crass, but it helps if you like people. If you're not a people person, that may be the first step you need to take. Look for value in every person. Put yourself in others' shoes. Find reasons to like them. You won't take an interest in people if deep down you care nothing about them. And if you care nothing about them, that flaw will always be a hindrance to your ability to lead people.

If this is an area of challenge for you, then you may want to take a look at *25 Ways to Win with People: How to Make Others Feel Like a Million Bucks*, which I coauthored with Les Parrott; or read the classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie. However you go about developing people skills, just remember that people always move toward someone who increases them and away from anyone who decreases them.

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2. LEARNING—GET TO KNOW PEOPLE

Showing people that you care about them is always a good thing. But if you don't also make an effort to get to know them as individuals, you run the risk of being like the *Peanuts* character, Charlie Brown, who said, "I love mankind. It's people I can't stand."

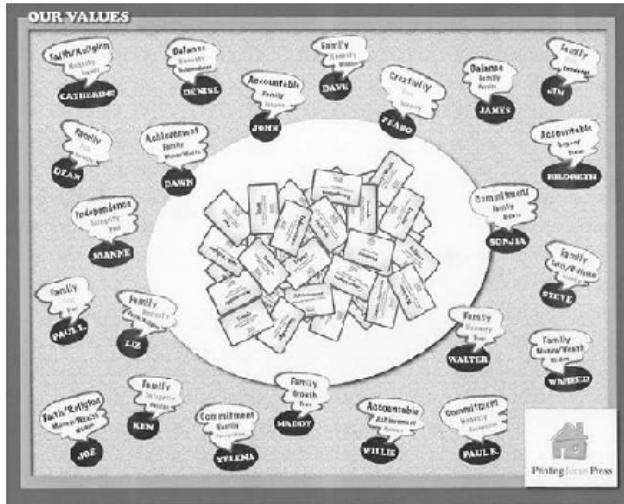
Take the time to talk to your peers in the organization. Ask to hear their stories. Try to discover their best skills. Learn to appreciate their differences. Ask for their opinions on work-related issues. And as much as you can, try to put yourself in their shoes.

There are also structured ways to learn about your coworkers. I often speak for Maximum Impact, a company I founded that is now owned and led by Todd Duncan. One of the exercises the organization offers to clients involves Value Cards. Participants are asked to thumb through a stack of forty-plus cards, each printed with a value, such as integrity, commitment, wealth, faith, creativity, and family. They are asked to choose their top six values, the ones they consider nonnegotiable. Then they are asked to eliminate two cards, and then another two. It prompts people to weigh what matters and make some tough choices.

Recently Rick Packer, a corporate trainer, shared an e-mail with me that he had received from John Farrell of PrintingHouse Press. In it he raved about the Value Card experience and how he used it to get to know the people in his organization better. John said:

A few weeks after I got back [from the workshop], I sat with each of my twenty-five employees—two at a time—so they could take part in the Maximum Impact Value Cards exercise. I told them I thought it would be a great experience, and that they may find out something more about each other than they knew before. I wasn't disappointed. Each one of the twenty-five enjoyed it so much that they were all eager for me to publicly post the values of each one of their coworkers. So by unanimous vote, I had my graphic designer create and print a 30 x 24-inch poster displaying our top three values. Today it has been officially posted in our office for all to see.

John went on to say that the camaraderie that already existed among his people had gotten even better. He also included a miniature version of the poster his artist created.



Not only does he now know his people better, but they are also in a better position to know, appreciate, and influence each other.

3. APPRECIATING—RESPECT PEOPLE

We tend to appreciate people who can do things we admire. That's only natural. But if we only appreciate people like ourselves, we're missing so much. We should strive to see others' unique experiences and skills as a resource and try to learn from them.

Dennis Bakke, chief executive of AES and author of *Joy at Work*, has an interesting take on this. He intentionally makes positive assumptions about people and strives to live them out in his desire to respect people. Bakke states his philosophy by describing the people at AES. He says they:

- are creative, thoughtful, trustworthy adults, capable of making important decisions;
- are accountable and responsible for their decisions and actions;

- are fallible (make mistakes, sometimes on purpose);
- are unique; and
- want to use our talents and skills to make a positive contribution to the organization and the world.⁴

If you treat your peers (and your employees) with this kind of respect, appreciating them for who they are, then they will be more likely to respect and listen to you in return.

4. CONTRIBUTING—ADD VALUE TO PEOPLE

Few things increase the credibility of leaders more than adding value to the people around them. That is especially true when they are neither obligated to do it nor likely to receive any kind of direct benefit from it. When you go out of your way to add value to your peers, they understand that you really want them to win with no hidden agenda of your own.

Here are some suggestions for how to get started:

Few things increase the credibility of leaders more than adding value to the people around them.

Don't keep your best stuff to yourself. Our natural tendency is to protect what's ours, whether it's our turf, our ideas, or our resources. But if you share what you have when it can help others, you really send a positive message to the people who work with you.

Fill in their gaps. I love that in the movie *Rocky*, Sylvester Stallone's character says of his fiancée Adrian: "I got gaps, she's got gaps, together we don't got gaps." That could be said of our coworkers and us. Instead of exploiting other people's gaps to get ahead of them, why not fill in each other's gaps and both get ahead?

Invest in their growth. I suggested in Challenge #2 (The Frustration Challenge: Following an Ineffective Leader) that you share resources with your leader. Why not do the same with your peers? As the saying goes, when you light another's candle, you lose nothing of your own. You just produce more light.

Take them along. Many times when we get an opportunity to do something exciting or special, we soak up the experience and enjoy it, but we keep it to ourselves; 360-Degree Leaders always think in terms of who they can take along with them at those times. If you want to influence your peers, share the good things you're doing with them.

At first it may feel a little awkward to add value to people on your own level. If you work in a hostile or highly competitive environment, your peers may at first look at you with suspicion. But persevere. If you give with no strings attached and try to help others win, they will, in time, come to trust your motives.

5. VERBALIZING—AFFIRM PEOPLE

Take a moment to think about the teachers you've had in your life. Who were your favorites? Why did you like those teachers more than the dozens of others? If you're like most people, you revered them because they affirmed you and made you feel good about yourself.

Few things build a person up like affirmation. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition* (Simon and Schuster, 1991), the word *affirm* comes from *ad firmare*, which means "to make firm." So when you affirm people, you make firm within them the things you see about them. Do that often enough, and the belief that solidifies within them will become stronger than the doubts they have about themselves.

If you want to influence your peers, become their best cheerleader. Praise their strengths. Acknowledge their accomplishments. Say positive things about them to your boss and peers. Sincerely compliment them at every opportunity, and someday you may have the opportunity to influence them.

6. LEADING—INFLUENCE PEOPLE

After taking the previous five steps—caring, learning, appreciating, contributing, and verbalizing—now you are finally ready to start leading your peers. The things you've done up to now have served to build your relationship with them, give you credibility, and display that your motives are good. With that kind of history, you will have earned the opportunity to influence them.

Some leaders are able to go through all the steps quickly, while others need quite a bit of time to complete them. The greater the natural leadership gifting you have, the more quickly you will be able to do it. But influencing others is not the end of the road. If your sole motivation is merely to get people to listen to you or do what you want, then you've really missed the boat. If you desire to become a 360-Degree Leader, then you need to take the next step. You need to help them win!

7. SUCCEEDING—WIN WITH PEOPLE

I know that you have the desire to lead others, or you would not have come this far in the book. But I don't know if you've given much thought to why you want to lead. I believe that good leaders balance two very important motivations. The first is to fulfill their vision. All leaders have inside of them a dream, a vision they want to see come to fruition. For some it's modest; for others it's huge. The second motivation is to see others succeed. Great leaders don't use people so that they can win. They lead people so that they all can win together. If that is truly your motivation, you can become the kind of person others want to follow—whether they are beside, above, or below you in the organizational hierarchy.

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The wonderful thing about helping others succeed is that it earns you more opportunities to help an even greater number of people. Haven't you seen that in every area of life? A winning coach or business leader has a much easier time recruiting potential players than someone without a winning track record. Once leaders prove that they can help make people's dreams come true, others seek them out so that they, too, can be helped to win.

And that's what starts the cycle over again. If you help others succeed, additional people will come into your life whom you will have an opportunity to help succeed. Every time that happens, you must choose to go through the process again, beginning with caring and ending with succeeding. You can't take shortcuts. True, if you help others win consistently for a long time, they will allow you to go through the process more quickly with them, but you still have to take each step.

When Lou Holtz was coaching Notre Dame's football team, he was quoted as saying, "Do what's right! Do the best you can and treat others the way you want to be treated, because they will ask three questions: (1) Can I trust you? (2) Do you believe in this? Are you committed to this—have a passion for this? (3) Do you care about me as a person?" If the people around you can answer yes to all of those questions, then you have a very good chance of making an impact on their lives.

Lead-Across Principle #2

PUT COMPLETING FELLOW LEADERS AHEAD OF COMPETING WITH THEM

Chris Hodges, a good leader who is a native of Baton Rouge, is well-known for telling Boudreaux jokes, a type of humor popular in Louisiana. Recently on a trip for EQUIP, he told me this one (I'll try to capture the accent in writing as best I can—just think Justin Wilson):

A group of Cajuns was sitting around bragging about how successful they were. Thibideaux says, "I just bought me another shrimp boat, yeah, and I got me a crew of ten people workin' for me."

"Dat ain't nottin'" says Landry, "I been promoted at the refinery, and now I got fifty men workin' for me."

Boudreaux hears this, and he doesn't want to look bad in front of his friends, so he says, "Oh yeah, well I got three hundred people under me."

Thibideaux says, "What you talkin' 'bout, Boudreaux? You mow lawns all day?"

"Dat's true," says Boudreaux, "but now I'm cuttin' da grass at the cemetery, and I got three hundred people under me."

There's nothing wrong with competition. The problem for many leaders is that they end up competing against their peers in their own organization in a way that hurts the team and them. It all depends on how you handle competition and how you channel it. In healthy working environments, there is both competition and teamwork. The issue is to know when each is appropriate. When it comes to your teammates, you want to compete in such a way that instead of *competing* with them, you are *completing* them. Those are two totally different mind-sets.

Winning at all costs will cost you when it comes to your peers.

COMPETING VS. COMPLETING

COMPETING

Scarcity mind-set
Me first
Destroys trust
Thinks win—lose
Single thinking
(my good ideas)
Excluding others

COMPLETING

Abundance mind-set
Organization first
Develops trust
Thinks win—win
Shared thinking
(our great ideas)
Including others

Winning at all costs will cost you when it comes to your peers. If your goal is to beat your peers, then you will never be able to lead across with them.

HOW TO BALANCE COMPETING AND COMPLETING

The bottom line is that the success of the whole team is more important than any individual wins. Organizations need both competition and teamwork to win. When those two elements exist in the right balance, great team chemistry is the result.

So how do you balance competing and completing? How do you learn to easily shift from one to the other? Here's what I recommend.

1. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR NATURAL DESIRE TO COMPETE

About four or five years after I graduated from college, I went back to play in an alumni basketball game against the college's then-current team. Back when I played for the team, I had been a shooting guard, but this time they assigned me to cover the team's point guard. As I watched him in warm-ups, I knew I was in trouble. He was a lot faster than I was. So I quickly developed a strategy.

The first time he tried to take the ball inside to the hoop, I fouled him. I don't mean I tapped his hand as he shot the ball. I mean I really fouled him—hard. He got up, limped to the line for his free throws, and clanged both of them off the back of the rim. So far, so good.

The next time his team came down the floor and he tried to set up a shot from outside, I fouled him hard again. As he got up, he started grumbling under his breath.

Soon after that when there was a loose ball, I dove after it, but I also made sure I landed right on top of him. I wasn't as big then as I am now, but I was heavier than he was.

He popped up and barked at me, "You're playing too hard. It's only a game." "Okay," I said with a grin, "then let me win."

It doesn't matter who you are or what you do, competitiveness is a natural leadership instinct. I haven't met a leader yet who didn't like to win. I look back now and recognize that I wasn't very mature. The good news is that the alumni team won the game. The bad news is that I didn't make a friend that day.

The key to being competitive is channeling it in a positive way. If you squash it, you lose an edge that motivates you to do some of your best work. If you let it run wild, you run over your teammates and alienate them. But if you control it and direct it, competitiveness can help you succeed.

2. EMBRACE HEALTHY COMPETITION

Every winning team I've ever seen or been a part of experienced healthy competition among team members. Healthy competition does so many positive things for a team, many of which cannot be achieved through anything else.

HEALTHY COMPETITION HELPS BRING OUT YOUR BEST. How many world records do you suppose are set when a runner runs alone? I don't know of one! People function at peak capacity when they have someone else pushing them. That's true whether you're learning, practicing, or playing in the game.

HEALTHY COMPETITION PROMOTES HONEST ASSESSMENT. What is the quickest way for you to measure your effectiveness in your profession? Maybe you have long-term measurements in place, such as monthly or yearly goals. But what if you want to know how you're doing today? How would you go about measuring it? You could look at your to-do list. But what if you set the bar too low for yourself? You could ask your boss. But maybe the best way would be to see what others in your line of work are doing. If you are significantly behind or ahead of them, wouldn't that tell you something? And if you were behind, wouldn't you try to figure out what you're doing wrong? It may not be the only way to assess yourself, but it certainly can provide a good reality check.

HEALTHY COMPETITION CREATES CAMARADERIE. When people compete together, it often creates a connection between them, whether they are on the same team or opposing teams. When competition is ongoing and friendly on the same team, it creates an even stronger bond that can lead to great camaraderie.

HEALTHY COMPETITION DOESN'T BECOME PERSONAL. Competition between teammates is ultimately about having fun. When competition is healthy, team-

mates remain friends when the game is done. They play against each other for the thrill of it, and when they're done, they can walk away together without hard feelings.

I love the joke about the rooster who dragged an ostrich egg into the henhouse. He laid it down for all the hens to see and said, "I don't want to intimidate you girls, but I just want to show you what they're doing up the road." Competition can definitely help motivate a team to get going.

3. PUT COMPETITION IN ITS PROPER PLACE

The whole goal of healthy competition is to leverage it for the corporate win. Competition in practice helps teammates to improve one another for game day. If it is channeled correctly, it is used to beat the other team.

The whole goal of healthy competition is to leverage it for the corporate win.

Of course, some leaders can take this to the extreme. Tommy Lasorda, former manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers, has told the story about the day his team was scheduled to play on the road against the Cincinnati Reds. In the morning, Lasorda went to mass. As he settled into his pew, the manager of the Reds, Johnny McNamara, happened to come into the same church and sit down in the same pew.

The men eyed one another, but neither spoke.

When mass was over, they had begun to walk out when Lasorda discovered that the other manager had paused to light a candle. He figured that gave the Reds an edge. "When he left, I went down and blew that candle out," Lasorda said. "All throughout the game, I kept hollering to him, 'Hey, Mac, it ain't gonna work. I blew it out.' We clobbered them that day, 13-2."

4. KNOW WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

No matter how much you desire to win, if you want to cultivate the ability to compete in a healthy way, you must make sure you never cross the line by "going for the throat" with your peers, because if you do, you will alienate them. And that line is not difficult to define. I'd say that when competitiveness raises the bar and makes others better, that's healthy. Anytime it lowers morale and hurts the team, it's unhealthy and out of line.

When I was leading Skyline Church in the San Diego area, my staff was very competent and very competitive. The core group who always led the charge

consisted of Dan Reiland, Sheryl Fleisher, and Tim Elmore. They all had their own departments and own areas of expertise, but they were always competing, always trying to one-up each other. Their friendly competition kept them on their toes, and it inspired the rest of the staff to join in and do their best. But as hard-driving and competitive as they were, if any one of them had a problem, the others were right there, ready to jump in and lend a hand. They always put the team's win ahead of their own.

Today those three leaders are out doing different things in different organizations across the country, but they remain friends. They keep in touch, share stories, and still help one another whenever they can. The kind of bond that develops when you compete together doesn't die easily. They have a deep respect for each other that continues to give them credibility—and influence—with one another.

Lead-Across Principle #3

BE A FRIEND

We often consider ourselves to be many things to the people who work alongside us—coworkers, teammates, contributors, competitors—but we often forget to be the one thing that every person wants: a friend. Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “The glory of friendship is not in the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is in the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when he discovers that someone else believes in him and is willing to trust him.”

No matter how driven or competitive your coworkers appear to be, they will enjoy having a friend on the job. Some people don't look to the workplace for friendship, but they will certainly benefit from finding it there. When a job is especially tough or unpleasant, having a friend is sometimes the only thing a person has to look forward to when going to work. And when the job is good, then having a friend is icing on the cake.

TO TEAMWORK, ADD FRIENDSHIP

Why do I recommend that you work to develop friendships on the job?

FRIENDSHIP IS THE FOUNDATION OF INFLUENCE

President Abraham Lincoln said, “If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend.” Good relationships make influence possible, and friendship is the most positive relationship you can develop on the job with your coworkers.

FRIENDSHIP IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

I believe long-term success is unachievable without good people skills. Theodore Roosevelt said, “The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.” Without it, most achievements are not possible, and even what we do achieve can feel hollow.

FRIENDSHIP IS THE SHELTER AGAINST SUDDEN STORMS

If you're having a bad day, who can make you feel better? A friend. When you have to face your fears, who would you rather do it with? A friend. When you fall on your face, who can help pick you up? A friend. Aristotle was right when he said, “True friends are a sure refuge.”

HOW TO BE A FRIEND

Undoubtedly, you already have friends, so you know how to develop friendships. But relationships at work can often be different, and I want to suggest a specific way that you should approach friendship within your organization. Make it your goal to be a friend, not to find a friend.

When most people approach friendships, they look for people who will reciprocate their efforts at relationship building, and if they don't sense any kind of mutual effort, they abandon their efforts with that individual and move on. At work, if you want to lead across, you need to keep working at being a friend—even with people who don't initially put any effort into being a friend back.

As you reach out to your coworkers, I want to encourage you to include the following steps in the approach you take:

1. LISTEN!

Author Richard Exley once said:

A true friend is one who hears and understands when you share your deepest feelings. He supports you when you are struggling; he corrects you, gently and with love, when you err; and he forgives you when you fail. A true friend prods you to personal growth, stretches you to your full potential. And most amazing of all, he celebrates your successes as if they were his own.

That entire process begins with listening.

Many people on the job just want to be left alone so that they can get their work done. If they do desire to interact with others, it's often to jockey for

position or to get others to listen to what they have to say. How rare it is when people go out of their way and make it a point to listen to others.

Ralph Nichols said, “The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.” If you become a consistently good listener to your coworkers, they will want to spend time with you. They will begin to seek you out. And if they develop a rapport with you, they will probably also begin asking advice from you. That is the starting point for influence with them.

2. FIND COMMON GROUND NOT RELATED TO WORK

Frank A. Clark said, “To enjoy a friend, I need more in common with him than hating the same people.” Unfortunately, for many people who work together, that's all they seem to have in common. So what's the solution if you don't seem to share common ground with someone at work? Try to discover what you have in common outside of the job.

If you see everyone as a potential friend, and look for connection points inside and outside of work, you have a good chance of finding common ground. And that is where friendships are built.

3. BE AVAILABLE BEYOND BUSINESS HOURS

Just as you need to find common ground outside of work to become a friend to coworkers, you also need to make yourself available outside of business hours. True friendship means being available.

If you won't do anything outside of work hours, then your relationship will probably never evolve beyond the confines of the work arena. The moment you take your relationship with a coworker outside of the work environment, it instantly begins to change. Think about the first time you had lunch with a coworker off-site. Even if you talked about work the entire time, didn't it change the way you saw that person from then on? How about if you've ever played in a work softball league or played golf with coworkers? Didn't you learn many things about people that you never knew before? Didn't you gain insights into personalities that were unrevealed until then? Think about the first time you went to a coworker's house, and consider the personal connection you felt with that person afterward.

True friendship isn't on the clock. When a friend is in need, real friends don't say, “It's after five. Can you call me back tomorrow?” Obviously, you want to

respect people's privacy, and you don't want to violate anybody's personal boundaries. But because leadership isn't limited to nine to five, friendship can't be either.

4. HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

Comic pianist Victor Borge said, "Laughter is the closest distance between two people." I have often found that to be true. Humor can quickly bond people who might not otherwise have a lot in common.

Charlie Wetzel said that when he went to graduate school to work on his master's degree at age twenty-four, he was a painfully serious person. He took himself—and everything else in life—way too seriously. But during his second year in school, he became a teaching assistant, and he got to know some of his fellow graduate students who were also teaching English composition classes for the University of New Orleans. One of those people was Homer Arrington.

Homer had grown up in Southern California, gone to school at Berkeley, and then done a variety of interesting jobs, including driving a cab in New York City for a couple of years. As all fourteen of the grad students would gather in their communal office, they would trade stories of their experiences in class and the troubles they were dealing with. Homer was a good student and an intellectual, but he also had a great sense of humor. When Charlie would tell a story about something that had really irritated him, Homer would see the humor in it, make jokes, and they both would end up laughing.

Though the two men initially had little in common, they quickly became friends. Now, twenty years later, Charlie credits Homer with helping him not take himself so seriously and with reawakening his sense of humor, something for which he continues to be grateful.

"Your best friend is he who brings out the best that is within you."
—HENRY FORD

If you maintain a sense of humor—even when times are tough, the job gets rough, and your coworkers are feeling out of sorts—you will help to create a positive atmosphere and will appear approachable and accessible to your coworkers. And that certainly will help your chances of making a friend.

5. TELL THE TRUTH WHEN OTHERS DON'T

Once when Henry Ford was having lunch with a man, he asked, "Who is your best friend?" When the man responded that he wasn't sure, Ford exclaimed, "I will tell you!" He took out a pencil and wrote his answer on the tablecloth: "Your best friend is he who brings out the best that is within you."

That is what friends do for one another. They bring out their best. Often their best is brought out by encouragement, but sometimes the best thing you can do for friends is tell them the truth. Not everybody is willing to do that, because they don't want to risk the relationship, or they really don't care enough to make the effort.

An eastern proverb says, "A friend is one who warns you." When you're headed for trouble, a friend lets you know. When you're blinded by your emotions, a friend tells you. When the quality of your work is hurting the organization or may hurt your career, a friend tells you the truth.

Stepping forward and telling people hard truths can be a risky thing. The irony is that in order for someone to listen to what you have to say about such things, you first need to have relational credibility with them. So it's kind of a catch-22. If you don't tell them, you're not really being a friend. But in order to tell them, you must already be a friend, or they won't accept what you have to say. The more relational currency you have deposited with them, the better the chance they will listen to what you have to say.

Charles Schwab, who started out as a stake driver and worked his way up to the job of president of Carnegie Steel (and later U.S. Steel) was said to be an incredible leader and a master motivator. He saw the value of friendship in every aspect of life, including work. Schwab said:

Be friends with everybody. When you have friends you will know there is somebody who will stand by you. You know the old saying, that if you have a single enemy you will find him everywhere. It doesn't pay to make enemies. Lead the life that will make you kind and friendly to everyone about you, and you will be surprised what a happy life you will live.

And you will also be surprised by the influence you will earn with your peers.

Lead-Across Principle #4

AVOID OFFICE POLITICS

A politician arrived late for a speaking engagement where he was scheduled as the keynote speaker. Usually he did his homework on the area and the organization, but because of his busy schedule, he had not been able to do it. He was rushed in as the attendees were finishing their dessert and taken immediately to the podium without having the chance to speak to anyone.

When he was introduced to the crowd, there was nothing he could do but dive in. With the bright lights shining in his eyes, he immediately launched into one of the main issues of the campaign and spoke at length. When he paused for a moment, the gentleman who had introduced him whispered that the group to whom he was speaking was on the opposite side of the issue.

Without missing a beat, the politician said, "My friends. Now that I have explained the opposition's position in great detail, I will tell you the truth."

Some people seeking public office may be able to get away with such tactics—though usually it backfires on them—but people in a working environment where their peers know them certainly cannot. Playing politics at work is a surefire way to alienate your peers.

I would define "playing politics" as changing who you appear to be or what you normally do to gain an advantage with whoever currently has power. Among those who run for public office, that often means changing their position on issues depending on which group they're speaking to. In work environments, it may mean sucking up to the boss, constantly changing positions to get on the winning side, or using people for personal gain without regard for how it affects them. Political people are fickle and opportunistic, doing what's expedient in the moment to win, regardless of what's best for their peers, their employees, or the organization.

TWO WAYS TO GET AHEAD

There seem to be two main paths for people to get ahead in organizations. One way is to try to get ahead by doing the work. The other is to try to get ahead by working an angle. It's the difference between production and politics.

PEOPLE WHO RELY ON PRODUCTION	PEOPLE WHO RELY ON POLITICS
Depend on how they grow	Depend on who they know
Focus on what they do	Focus on what they say
Become better than they appear	Appear better than they are
Provide substance	Take shortcuts
Do what's necessary	Do what's popular
Work to control their own destiny	Let others control their destiny
Grow into the next level	Hope to be given the next level
Base decisions on principles	Base decisions on opinions

The bottom line is that people who might be described as "political" are ruled by their desire to get ahead instead of a desire for excellence, productivity, teamwork, or consistency. Whatever values and skills they have are secondary to their ambition. And while they sometimes appear to get ahead, their gains are always temporary. In the long run, integrity, consistency, and productivity always pay off—in better teamwork and a clear conscience.

If you have played politics at work in the past, perhaps you saw others do it and you thought that was what you had to do to advance in your career. Or maybe you didn't have confidence in yourself because you weren't growing, and your skills were not advancing. You may not have done it maliciously, but whatever the reason, if you have played politics, you can be certain that you have betrayed the trust of some of your coworkers. And you will probably have to go to those people to apologize and seek reconciliation. That may be hard, but if you desire to lead across, you will need to do it to regain credibility with your peers.

If you are not a political person by nature, I still recommend that you exercise caution. Some working environments seem to draw people toward behavior that will ultimately damage peer-to-peer relationships. To avoid such difficulties, do the following:

1. AVOID GOSSIP

It's been said that great people talk about ideas, average people talk about themselves, and small people talk about others. That's what gossip does. It makes people small. There really is no upside to gossip. It diminishes the person being talked about. It diminishes the person who is saying unkind things about others, and it even diminishes the listener. That's why you should avoid not only

spreading gossip but also being a recipient of it. If you stop people from unloading gossip on you, it will make you feel better about the person who's being talked about, as well as about yourself. Besides, whoever gossips to you will gossip about you.

British prime minister Winston Churchill said, "When the eagles are silent, the parrots begin to jabber." 360-Degree Leaders are like eagles: they soar; they inspire; they fly high. And they don't talk just to hear themselves. They don't vent about someone to others to make themselves feel better. If they have a problem with a person, they go to that individual and address the issue directly—never through a third party. They praise publicly and criticize privately. And they never say anything about others that they wouldn't want them to hear—because they probably will.

Great people talk about ideas, average people talk about themselves, and small people talk about others.

2. STAY AWAY FROM PETTY ARGUMENTS

In most places where people work, there are past grudges, ongoing feuds, and petty arguments that run like currents through the organization. Wise leaders in the middle of an organization avoid getting sucked into these easily, even if they think they can resolve them. As the saying goes, a bulldog can beat a skunk in a fight anytime, but he knows it's just not worth it. That's also the attitude of 360-Degree Leaders.

Recently I received an e-mail from Marvin "Skip" Schoenhals, chairman and president of Wilmington Savings Fund Society, whom I had met while I was speaking at a CEO forum in Dallas, Texas. When I met Skip, he told me a little bit about himself, and I asked him to write me and share more of his story. He wrote about how he once lived in Owosso, Michigan, and served on the seven-member city council. Skip said he had a knack for seeing the big picture and synthesizing many points of view. He wrote:

I was often able to summarize issues quickly and move the group to a higher, less detailed level of discussion. As a result, fellow council members increasingly sought my opinion on various matters coming before the council.

While I recognized that this was happening, I never attempted to capitalize on it. I was willing to speak my mind, but I would in the end defer to the mayor. Further, I would also pick my spots. Sometimes even if I thought that the council was not on the right big-picture item, I didn't always jump in. I let some issues go, even though I did not agree with them. I realized I gained credibility by not having an opinion on everything.

Skip went on to tell about how in a year's time, he became the informal leader of the council and then later the mayor.

It is a sign of maturity when someone knows what's petty and what's not—when to jump in, and when to sit back and listen. If you desire to become effective as a 360-Degree Leader, you will need to cultivate that kind of ability.

3. STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT, NOT JUST FOR WHAT'S POPULAR

While I believe that wise leaders often sit back and listen, I also believe that leaders must stand up for what's right, even when such a stand will be unpopular. How do you do that? How do you know when to stand up and when not to, especially in a culture where many people see truth as subjective? My answer is that you use the Golden Rule: in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.¹

In *Ethics 101*, I explained that a form of the Golden Rule is accepted by nearly every culture in the world. Besides Christianity, the religions that have some version of the Golden Rule include Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Baha'i, and Jainism, among others. When someone is being treated in a way that you would not want to be treated, then it's time to stand up.

4. LOOK AT ALL SIDES OF THE ISSUE

I love this piece of business advice: before you have an argument with your boss, take a good look at both sides—his side and the outside. While seeing things from multiple points of view with your peers may not have as important stakes as seeing things from your boss's point of view, there is still great value in seeing issues from as many sides as possible. It always pays to avoid being dogmatic or stuck in one box in your thinking.

One of the advantages of leading from the middle of an organization is that you have the opportunity to see things from perspectives that many others don't. Leaders at the top of the organization often have a difficult time seeing anything other than the big picture or the bottom line. Those on the bottom are equally limited, often seeing only the issues of their area. But leaders in the middle have a better perspective. They see how any given issue impacts them, but they are also able to look up and down. They are close to the people in the trenches and can see things from their point of view, and they are close enough

to the top to see at least some of the big picture. 360-Degree Leaders make the most of this perspective to lead not only up and down, but also across.

Before you have an argument with your boss, take a good look at both sides—his side and the outside.

5. DON'T PROTECT YOUR TURF

Politics is often about power. Political leaders protect whatever is theirs because they don't want to lose power. If they lose power, then they might not win. And as I already mentioned, winning is their primary motivation. People who want to win at all costs fight and scrap to keep everything that belongs to them. They fight for their budget. They fight for office space. They guard their ideas. They hoard their supplies. If it belongs to them, they protect it.

People who want to lead across take a broader view. They look at what's best for the team. If they have to give up some space to help the organization, they do it. If it makes more sense for another leader to accomplish a task they've done in the past—and if some of the dollars from their budget also go to that leader—they deal with it. What matters is the team.

6. SAY WHAT YOU MEAN, AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

Like every other kind of leadership, becoming a 360-Degree Leader is about building trust with people. When asked what he considered the most essential qualification for a politician, Winston Churchill said, "It's the ability to foretell what will happen tomorrow, next month, and next year—and to explain afterward why it did not happen." Churchill understood the dynamics of politics as well as anyone in the twentieth century. Political leaders find themselves under tremendous pressure. Maybe that's why some of them crack under it and tell people what they want to hear rather than what the politicians really believe. And those who do crack create a negative reputation that all politicians have to labor under.

If you want to develop trust with others, you must be more than competent. You must also be credible and consistent. The way to achieve those qualities is to make sure that what you *say*, what you *do*, and what you *say you do* all match. If you do that, the people who work with you will know they can depend on you.

I don't mean to cast a negative light on everyone involved in politics. I've known many candidates for public office who displayed the highest integrity and truly wanted to serve the people. But the word *politician*, which once conjured positive images, brings to mind negative ones for most people.

Instead of trying to be a politician, strive to be a statesman. *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* states:

These terms differ particularly in their connotations; *Politician* suggests the schemes and devices of a person who engages in (esp. small) politics for party ends or for one's own advantage; a dishonest politician. *Statesman* suggests the eminent ability, foresight, and unselfish patriotic devotion of a person dealing with (esp. important or great) affairs of state: a distinguished statesman.²

Becoming a statesman for your organization is an excellent idea. If you continually keep the big picture in mind, remain unselfish in your efforts, and try to be a diplomat with your peers, you will distinguish yourself, gain credibility, and improve your effectiveness and that of the team. And you will also increase your influence.

Lead-Across Principle #5

EXPAND YOUR CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES

In 1997, I relocated my companies from San Diego, California, to Atlanta, Georgia. In the wake of that move, I felt that I needed to expand my circle of acquaintances into the African-American community, which was really a new world for me.

I grew up in a small town in Ohio in the 1950s and '60s where not many people of color lived. The first ten years of my career I worked primarily in rural Indiana and Ohio—middle America. The next fifteen years I worked in Southern California. There I was introduced to the Hispanic culture and its people, and I led a church that included persons of many backgrounds; but once again, there were not a lot of African-Americans. Even in the conferences I taught around the country, only a small percentage of participants were African-American. So when I got to Atlanta, in the heart of the Deep South, I knew it was time for me to expand my horizons and grow in this area.

I knew someone in Atlanta who I hoped would help me with this: Dr. Samuel Chand. Sam is the chancellor of Beulah Heights Bible College, a multiracial college with a student population that is predominantly African-American. I asked Sam if he would be willing to introduce me to influential African-American leaders from the area, which he said he would gladly do. From then on, every other month I attended a lunch that he arranged with different leaders from that community.

It has been a wonderful growing experience for me. I've met a lot of terrific people, such as Bishop Eddie Long, an excellent leader of one of Atlanta's largest churches; Corretta Scott King and her children; and many others. A few people knew me by reputation, but most of these leaders did not. I've had a great time connecting with them. I could tell that a few people wondered if I had some kind of unspoken agenda, but I think they quickly accepted that my desire was to learn—and to add value to them if I could. That is my mind-set anytime I meet someone new. At times during those lunches I was taken out of my comfort

zone, yet I'm glad to say I learned much about the African-American community and have developed wonderful relationships with many of my new friends.

It's always easier to stay within environments where we are comfortable and secure. In fact, that's what most people do. They avoid change and remain where it's safe. But you can't grow and avoid change at the same time. It just doesn't work that way. If you want to expand your influence, you have to expand your circle of acquaintances.

Expanding your circle of acquaintances may be uncomfortable, but it can do a lot for you. First, it helps you improve. Expanding your circle will expose you to new ideas. It will prompt you to see things from a different point of view, which will help you generate new ideas of your own. It will help you to learn new working methods and pick up additional skills. And it will help you to become more innovative.

Expanding your circle also has another valuable benefit. It expands your network, putting you into contact with more people and giving you potential access to their networks, something Yahoo chief solutions officer Tim Sanders describes in *Love Is the Killer App*. Sanders wrote:

In the twenty-first century, our success will be based on the people we know. Everyone in our address book is a potential partner for every person we meet . . . Relationships are nodes in our individual network that constitute the promise of our bizlife and serve as a predictor of our success. Some of the brightest new-economy luminaries, such as Kevin Kelly (*New Rules for the New Economy*), or Larry Downes and Chunka Mui (*Unleashing the Killer App*), argue that companies, organizations, and individuals comprise, and are most highly valued for, their web of relationships. If you organize and leverage your relationships as a network, you will generate long-lasting value (and peace of mind) beyond your stock options, mutual funds, and bank accounts. You will also create a value proposition for new contacts, which in turn drives membership in that network—the prime law of business ecosystems, known as the Law of Network Effects. Value explodes with membership . . . When we are fully and totally networked, we are powerful.¹

Sanders believes that along with knowledge and compassion, your network is your most valuable asset.

HOW TO EXPAND YOUR CIRCLE

Each of us has a natural circle of people we're comfortable with. Those people comprise our relational comfort zone. Perhaps you enjoy meeting people and already make it a practice to get out and connect with individuals outside of

your circle. If that is the case, keep it up. The more broadly you connect with people, the greater your potential to influence—and be positively influenced by—others.

If you are not inclined to stretch yourself relationally, then think about this. People are like rubber bands. They are most valuable when they are stretched, not when they are at rest. Your value as a leader in the middle will increase as you stretch and get out of your comfort zone relationships, which are usually comprised of:

- People that you've known for a long time;
- People with whom you have common experiences; and
- People that you know like you.

What would happen if the number of people in your circle expanded from five to fifty or from a dozen to more than a hundred? When you had a question your coworkers and you couldn't answer, how quickly do you think you could get it from someone you know? If a friend were looking for a job, how much more likely would it be for you to help her connect with someone who might be looking for help? If you were trying to break into a new market, wouldn't it be likely that you could call an acquaintance and get a quick overview of that industry—or at least call someone who has a friend in that industry? You would even have quicker access to information on the best restaurants in town, the best vacation spots, or where to buy a car. And with every quick connection you are able to make or share with a colleague, the more value you would have—and more influence you would gain—with your peers.

If you desire to expand your circle of acquaintances, all you need are a strategy and a will to do it. You must provide the effort, but I will be glad to give you the following ideas to help you with the strategy.

1. EXPAND BEYOND YOUR INNER CIRCLE

To get outside of your comfort zone, why not start with those in your comfort zone? Every friend you have has a friend you don't have. Begin with your inner-circle friends, and expand the pool. What businesses are your closest friends in? Whom do they know who might benefit you? Think about the interesting people you've heard friends talk about. Also consider their interests. Who have they connected with through their hobbies and travels?

To get outside of your comfort zone, why not start with those in your comfort zone? Every friend you have has a friend you don't have.

I bet for each of your friends, you could come up with a list of at least three or four—and in some cases as many as a dozen—people you would have interest in meeting through them. And chances are they would have just as much interest in meeting you! Why not start asking your friends to introduce you to some of them? Ask them to set up a lunch, as I did with Sam Chand. Or ask if you can tag along as friends engage in their hobbies. Or simply ask for a phone number and make contact yourself.

You'll be amazed by how quickly your circle expands in this first round. You can double, triple, or quadruple your circle of acquaintances almost overnight. And once you do expand the pool of people you know, be sure to touch base with your new contacts periodically so that you remain connected.

2. EXPAND BEYOND YOUR EXPERTISE

I obviously value people who have experience in my field. In fact, I recommend that you “talk your craft” with others who share expertise in your area. But you should never limit yourself to connecting with people within your department or profession.

If you work in an organization of any size, one large enough to have multiple departments, then I recommend that you start by connecting with people in the other departments. It doesn't matter what kind of an organization you're in, when there is connection and understanding between departments, everyone wins. When the sales and accounting people develop relationships and grasp what each other does, when the waitstaff and the cooks get along in a restaurant, when marketing department workers and engineers appreciate each other, it helps them, their customers, and the organization. Everybody wins.

3. EXPAND BEYOND YOUR STRENGTHS

Even outside of work, I think we all tend to respect and gravitate to people whose strengths are like our own. Sports stars hang out together. Actors marry other actors. Entrepreneurs enjoy trading stories with other entrepreneurs. The problem is that if you spend time only with people like yourself, your world can become terribly small and your thinking limited.

If you are a creative type, go out of your way to meet people who are analytical. If you have a type-A personality, then learn to appreciate the strengths of people who are more laid back. If your thing is business, spend time with people who work in nonprofit environments. If you are white-collar, learn to connect with blue-collar people. Anytime you get a chance to meet people with strengths very different from your own, learn to celebrate their abilities and get to know them better. It will broaden your experience and increase your appreciation for people.

4. EXPAND BEYOND YOUR PERSONAL PREJUDICES

French novelist André Gide said that “an unprejudiced mind is probably the rarest thing in the world.” Unfortunately, that is probably true. I think all human beings have prejudices of some sort. We prejudge people we haven't met because of their race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, nationality, religion, or associations. And it really does limit us.

If we desire to grow beyond not only our circle of acquaintances but also some of the limitations created by our own thoughts, then we need to break down the walls of prejudice that exist in our minds and hearts. Novelist Gwen Bristow said, “We can get the new world we want, if we want it enough to abandon our prejudices, every day, everywhere. We can build this world if we practice now what we said we were fighting for.”

What group of people do you find yourself disliking or mistrusting? Why do you hold such views? Has your vision been obscured by the actions of one or more individuals? The way to change your blanket likes and dislikes is to reach out to people of that group and try to find common ground with them. This may be the most difficult of all circles to break out of, but it is well worth doing.

5. EXPAND BEYOND YOUR ROUTINE

One of the greatest impediments to meeting new people is routine. We often go to the same places all the time—the same gas stations, coffee shop, grocery store, and restaurants. We employ the same providers of services. We use the same companies for our business. It's just easy. But sometimes we need to shake things up and try something new. It's all about getting outside of your comfort zone.

There are even times when getting out of your routine helps you stay connected with people you already know. In the spring of 2005, my companies, EQUIP and ISS, moved their offices to a new facility. In the past, both companies

used office space that was separate, but well connected to each other though common halls. They also shared some work rooms, conference rooms, a lunchroom, and so forth.

The offices in their new location still occupy the same building, but they have become much more separate. They occupy two different suites, each with all of its own supporting spaces. A few weeks after the move, I was talking to Linda Eggers, my assistant who has worked with me for nearly twenty years, and she told me that the changes in the office had caused her to change her routine.

Whenever I talk to Linda, I ask her how things are going at work, because she always has a good feel for the atmosphere at the office, and she is usually aware of any issues that are occurring. But after the move, she remarked that EQUIP was so far removed from her normal routine, that she didn't have any idea how everybody was doing over on that side of the building. So Linda, who is very relational, made it her goal to break from her routine at least once a day to touch base with somebody on the EQUIP team. It's extra work, but she knows how valuable it can be.

I know that my ideas for expanding one's circle of influence may not be revolutionary. They're really just practical thoughts. But the whole point of this chapter is to remind you that you can't wait for life to come to you. You need to initiate, invest, and do what's right when you don't feel like it—especially when it comes to cultivating relationships.

I can't remember a single time I've regretted getting outside of my comfort zone and trying to get acquainted with someone I didn't know. Even if I failed to connect, or if there was no chemistry, or if the person turned out to be unpleasant, it always yielded some kind of benefit, either because I had a new experience, learned something new, or received an introduction to someone else I enjoyed meeting. It's an investment in time—and influence—that is always worth making.

Lead-Across Principle #6

LET THE BEST IDEA WIN

Imagine that you're getting ready to go into an important project meeting that will be attended by your boss and several people who are on the same level as you in the organization. Let's say that you were picked from among your peers by your boss to lead the meeting, and you see this time as your chance to shine. You've done your homework and then some. You've spent countless hours thinking through the project, brainstorming, planning, and endeavoring to foresee any obstacles that could be ahead. Based on your preliminary discussions with your staff and your peers, you feel that your ideas are better than anything you've heard from anyone else.

So you begin the meeting with great confidence. But before long, the agenda is not proceeding the way you expected or planned. Your boss makes a comment and sends the flow of the discussion in an entirely new direction. At first you think, *That's okay. I can salvage this. My ideas will still work; I just need to steer everyone back around to them.*

And then one of your peers launches in with an idea. You don't think much of it, but everyone else seems to think it's wonderful. A couple of other people in the room springboard off of that initial idea and begin to build on it. You can feel the energy in the room starting to build. Ideas are sparking. And everyone is clearly moving away from everything you've spent weeks planning—the idea that was your “baby.”

What do you do?

For most people in those circumstances, their natural instinct would be to fight for their ideas. After all, by then they would have made quite an investment in them, such as the following:

- *The Intellectual Investment*—it takes hours of thinking, planning, and problem solving spent to gather, create, and refine an idea.

- *The Physical Investment*—getting ready for an important meeting or presentation usually takes a lot of time, effort, and resources.
- *The Emotional Investment*—when people come up with something they see as a good idea, it's hard to keep themselves from thinking about not only what the idea could do for the company but also what it could do for them and their careers.

By this time, they become pretty attached to their ideas, and it becomes difficult to let those ideas die, especially when someone else who didn't do any work may come in and get all the credit.

IDEAS: THE LIFEBLOOD OF AN ORGANIZATION

If you desire to become a 360-Degree Leader, then you need to resist the temptation to fight for your idea when it's not the best idea.

If you desire to become a 360-Degree Leader, then you need to resist the temptation to fight for your idea when it's not the best idea. Why? Because good ideas are too important to the organization. Harvey Firestone, founder of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, said, “Capital isn't so important in business. Experience isn't so important. You can get both of these. What is important is ideas. If you have ideas, you have the main asset you need, and there isn't any limit to what you can do with your business and your life. They are any man's greatest asset—ideas.”

Great organizations possess leaders throughout the organization who produce great ideas. That is how they become great. The progress they make and the innovations they create don't come down from on high. Their creative sessions are not dominated by top-down leaders. Nor does every meeting become a kind of wrestling match to see who can dominate everyone else. People come together as teams, peers work together, and they make progress because they want the best idea to win.

“Capital isn't so important in business. Experience isn't so important. You can get both of these. What is important is ideas.”

—HARVEY FIRESTONE

Leaders in the middle of the organization who help to surface good ideas are creating what an organization needs most. They do that by producing synergy among their peers. And they will develop influence with their peers because when they are present, they make the whole team better.

WHAT LEADS TO THE BEST IDEAS?

To let the best idea win, you must first generate good ideas. And then you must work to make them even better. How do 360-Degree Leaders do that? How do they help the team find the best ideas? I believe 360-Degree Leaders follow this pattern:

1. 360-DEGREE LEADERS LISTEN TO ALL IDEAS

Finding good ideas begins with an open-minded willingness to listen to all ideas. Mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said, “Almost all really new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are first produced.” During the brainstorming process, shutting down any ideas might prevent you from discovering the good ones.

In *Thinking for a Change*, one of the eleven thinking skills I recommend people learn is shared thinking. It is faster than solo thinking, is more innovative, and has greater value. Most important, I believe, is the fact that great thinking comes when good thoughts are shared in a collaborative environment where people contribute to them, shape them, and take them to the next level. A 360-Degree Leader helps to create such an environment.

“Almost all really new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are first produced.”

—ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

2. 360-DEGREE LEADERS NEVER SETTLE FOR JUST ONE IDEA

I think many times leaders are too quick to settle on one idea and run with it. That is because leaders are so action oriented. They want to go. They want to

make something happen. They want to take the hill! The problem is that they sometimes fight their way to the top of the hill only to find that it's not the right one.

One idea is never enough. Many ideas make us stronger. I once heard an analyst say he thought that was the reason the communist bloc fell at the end of the twentieth century. Communism created a system based primarily on only one idea. If anyone tried to do things a different way, they were knocked down or shipped out.

In contrast, democracy is a system based on a multitude of ideas. If people want to try something different, they have the chance to float their idea and see what happens. If it catches on, it moves forward. If not, it is replaced by another idea. Because of that freedom, in democratic countries creativity is high, opportunities are unlimited, and the potential for growth is astounding. The democratic system can be messy, but that is also true of any endeavor that's creative and collaborative.

The same kind of free-market mentality that drives the largest economy in the world can also drive organizations. If people are open to ideas and options, they can keep growing, innovating, and improving.

3. 360-DEGREE LEADERS LOOK IN UNUSUAL PLACES FOR IDEAS

Good leaders are attentive to ideas; they are always searching for them. And they cultivate that attentiveness and practice it as a regular discipline. As they read the newspaper, watch a movie, listen to their colleagues, or enjoy a leisure activity, they are always on the lookout for ideas or practices they can use to improve their work and their leadership.

If you desire to find good ideas, you have to search for them. Rarely does a good idea come looking for you.

4. 360-DEGREE LEADERS DON'T LET PERSONALITY OVERSHADOW PURPOSE

When someone you don't like or respect suggests something, what is your first reaction? I bet it's to dismiss it. You've heard the phrase, "Consider the source." That's not a bad thing to do, but if you're not careful, you may very likely throw out the good with the bad.

Don't let the personality of someone you work with cause you to lose sight of the greater purpose, which is to add value to the team and advance the organization. If that means listening to the ideas of people with whom you have no

chemistry, or worse, a difficult history, so be it. Set aside your pride and listen. And in cases where you must reject the ideas of others, make sure you reject only the idea and not the person.

5. 360-DEGREE LEADERS PROTECT CREATIVE PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS

Ideas are such fragile things, especially when they first come to light. Advertising executive Charlie Brower said, "A new idea is delicate. It can be killed by a sneer or a yawn; it can be stabbed to death by a quip and worried to death by a frown on the right man's brow."

If you desire the best idea to win, then become a champion of creative people and their contributions to your organization. When you discover peers who are creative, promote them, encourage them, and protect them. Pragmatic people often shoot down the ideas of creative people. 360-Degree Leaders who value creativity can help the creative people around them to thrive and keep generating ideas that benefit the organization.

6. 360-DEGREE LEADERS DON'T TAKE REJECTION PERSONALLY

When your ideas are not received well by others, do your best not to take it personally. When someone in a meeting does that, it can kill the creative process, because at that point the discussion is no longer about the ideas or helping the organization; it becomes about the person whose feelings are hurt. In those moments if you can stop competing and focus your energy on creating, you will open the way for the people around you to take their creativity to the next level.

When I give this advice, I'm not just offering up platitudes. I've had to adopt the right attitude when it comes to ideas, and I can give you an example of where I've had to set aside my own wants and desires and accept the creativity of others. If you don't have any personal experience in the publishing world, then I'm guessing that you believe authors always select the titles of their books. While that may be the way it works for some authors, it has not been the case for me. I've written more than forty books, yet I think I've selected the titles for about a dozen of them. Following is a list of the last nine trade books I've written. Of those, I've selected the title of only one.

The 360-Degree Leader

25 Ways to Win with People

Winning with People

Today Matters

Thinking for a Change

The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player

The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork

The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

I wanted to call it *Leading from the Middle of the Pack*.

Les Parrott came up with the concept and title.

Charlie Wetzel came up with that title.

I wanted to call it *The Secret of Your Success*.

I wanted to call it *Thinking Your Way to the Top*.

The team at Thomas Nelson picked that title.

I got to pick the title of this book!

The concept and title were developed in a joint marketing meeting.

The concept and title came from Victor Oliver, my editor.

A book is a pretty personal thing for an author. Why would I allow someone else to pick the title? Because I know my ideas aren't always the best ideas. I often think they are, but when everyone in the room has a different opinion, it pays to listen. That's why I've adopted the attitude that the company owner doesn't need to win—the best idea does.

Mel Newhoff is executive vice president of Bozell Worldwide, a top advertising agency. In his industry, ideas are everything. Newhoff has some good advice about the big picture concerning ideas and how to approach your interaction with others in relation to them:

Be passionate about your work and have the integrity to stand up for your ideas. But also know when to compromise.

Without passion you will not be taken seriously. If you don't defend your ideas, no one else will either. When principle is involved, don't budge.

But there is another side to this also. There are very few real "absolutes" in life. Most matters involve taste or opinion, not principle. In these areas recognize that you can compromise. If you become someone who can never compromise, you will forfeit opportunities to those who can.

Being a 360-Degree Leader and leading across is not about getting your own way. It's not about winning at all costs. It's about winning respect and influence with your peers so that you can help the whole team win. Should you be passionate and determined, believing in yourself and your ability to contribute? Definitely. Should you hold on to your deeply held values and stand on principle when those are in jeopardy? Absolutely. But never forget that having a collaborative spirit helps the organization. When you think in terms of *our* idea instead of *my* idea or *her* idea, you're probably on track to helping the team win. That

should be your motivation, not just trying to win friends and influence people.
But I think you'll find that if you let the best idea win, you will win friends and influence people.

Lead-Across Principle #7

DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE PERFECT

Nothing would get done at all if a man waited until he could do something so well that no one could find fault with it.

—JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN

A man who had been suffering from constant headaches finally went to see his doctor.

"I don't know why I keep getting these terrible headaches," he lamented. "I don't drink like so many other people do. I don't smoke like so many other people do. I don't run around at night like so many other people do. I don't overeat like so many other people do. I don't—"

At this point, the doctor interrupted him. "Tell me," the physician asked, "this pain you complain of, is it a sharp shooting pain?"

"Yes," the man answered.

"And does it hurt here, here, and here?" the doctor asked indicating three places around his head.

"Yes," the man replied hopefully, "that's it exactly."

"Simple," the doctor said, rendering his diagnosis. "Your problem is that you have your halo on too tight."

Many leaders are similar to the man in that joke. They try so hard to make others think they're perfect that it about kills them. The problem, to quote Norman Cousins, longtime editor of the *Saturday Review*, is that "to talk about the need for perfection in man is to talk about the need for another species."

HOW TO BE "REAL" IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

One of the worst things leaders can do is expend energy on trying to make others think they're perfect. That's true whether the leader is CEO or functioning in the middle of the organization. It's a crock. The closest to perfection people ever come is when they write their resumé. Since nobody is perfect—not you, not your peers, not your boss—we need to quit pretending. People who are real, who are genuine concerning their weaknesses as well as their strengths, draw others to them. They engender trust. They are approachable. And they are a breath of fresh air in an environment where others are scrambling to reach the top by trying to look good.

Here's how I recommend you approach "getting real" to become a more effective 360-Degree Leader:

1. ADMIT YOUR FAULTS

Recently at a forum for CEOs where I was invited to speak, I suggested to the leaders in attendance that they be honest about their weaknesses and admit their faults to the people they work with when they returned to their companies. After I was done speaking, a CEO approached me because he wanted to talk about that remark.

"I can't believe you're suggesting we talk about our weaknesses with our people," he said. "I think that's a really bad idea."

When I asked him why, he answered, "A leader should never show weakness or fear. He should always be in control, in command. Otherwise his people lose confidence in him."

"I think you're laboring under a false assumption," I replied.

"What's that?" he said.

"You think your people don't know your weaknesses," I explained. "I'm not suggesting that you admit your faults to give your people information they don't already have. I'm suggesting it because it lets them know that you know your faults."

The people who work alongside you know your weaknesses, faults, and blind spots. If you doubt that—and you have great courage—just ask them! When you get real and admit your shortcomings, what you're doing is making yourself approachable and trustworthy. And when you make mistakes, admit them and quickly ask for forgiveness. Nothing is more disarming, and nothing does a better job of clearing the decks relationally.

2. ASK FOR ADVICE

It has been said that advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't. Isn't that often the case? Some people won't ask for advice when they don't have an answer because they are afraid it will make them look bad; they only ask advice if they can't make up their minds. How much more quickly would people get things done if they asked for help when they needed it instead of trying to fake it until they make it?

3. WORRY LESS ABOUT WHAT OTHERS THINK

James C. Humes, in *The Wit and Wisdom of Winston Churchill* (Harper Perennial, 1994), told about an incident that occurred one day at the House of Commons. It is customary for members of parliament to expound, and then the prime minister is given an opportunity to respond to their comments. On this day, a member of the Socialist party railed against Prime Minister Churchill, pouring out abusive words against him. While the man spoke, Churchill remained impassive. He seemed almost bored. When the man was finished, Churchill rose and said, "If I valued the opinion of the honorable gentleman, I might get angry."

People who consider the opinions of others too much often perform too little. They get caught up in pleasing others. I know, because I used to be a people pleaser. Early in my career I was often more worried about what others thought of me than I was about doing what I knew to be best. But in the end, each of us has to live with ourselves. It took me a while, but I finally grasped that knowing in my heart I did right was more important than pleasing or impressing others. Failure is inevitable, so I might as well act in a way that allows me to sleep well at night. Besides, one of the nice things about being imperfect is the joy that it brings to others!

One of the nice things about being imperfect is the joy that it brings to others!

If you want to gain credibility with your peers, you've got to be yourself. If you're genuine, will everyone like you? No. But pretending to be something you're not won't make everyone like you either. It will actually make you less likable.

4. BE OPEN TO LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Have you ever met someone who felt compelled to play the expert all the time? Such people aren't much fun to be around after a while, because the only

input they seem open to is their own. And as the saying goes, people won't go along with you unless they can get along with you.

I love the way President Abraham Lincoln is said to have handled a person who had a know-it-all attitude. Lincoln asked, "How many legs will a sheep have if you call the tail a leg?"

"Five," the man answered.

"No," replied Lincoln, "he'll still have four, because calling a tail a leg doesn't make it one."

If you really desire others to see you as an approachable person, go a step beyond just willingness to admit your weaknesses. Be willing to learn from them. One of the things I teach in *Winning with People* is the Learning Principle, which states, "Each person we meet has the potential to teach us something." I really believe that. If you embrace that idea, I believe you will discover two things. First, you will learn a lot, because every time you meet someone, it is a learning opportunity. Second, people will warm up to you. Complete strangers often treat me like an old friend, simply because I am open to them.

5. PUT AWAY PRIDE AND PRETENSE

Too often we think that if we can impress others, we will gain influence with them. We want to become others' heroes—to be larger than life. That creates a problem because we're real live human beings. People can see us for who we really are. If we make it our goal to impress them, we puff up our pride and end up being pretentious—and that turns people off.

If you want to influence others, don't try to impress them. Pride is really nothing more than a form of selfishness, and pretense is only a way to keep people at arm's length so that they can't see who you really are. Instead of impressing others, let them impress you.

It's really a matter of attitude. The people with charisma, those who attract others to themselves, are individuals who focus on others, not themselves. They ask questions of others. They listen. They don't try to be the center of attention. And they never try to pretend they're perfect.

Poet and Harvard professor Robert Hillyer said, "Perfectionism is a dangerous state of mind in an imperfect world. The best way is to forget doubts and set about the task at hand . . . If you are doing your best, you will not have time to worry about failure." That's good advice. If you always do your best, your peers will respect you. And if they respect you, they will listen to you and give you a chance. And that's where leadership starts.

Section IV Review

The Principles 360-Degree Leaders Need to Lead Across

Before you begin learning about leading down the 360-Degree Leader way, review the seven principles you need to master in order to lead across:

1. Understand, practice, and complete the leadership loop.
2. Put completing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them.
3. Be a friend.
4. Avoid office politics.
5. Expand your circle of acquaintances.
6. Let the best idea win.
7. Don't pretend you're perfect.

How well are you doing those seven things? If you're not sure, take the 360-Degree Leadership assessment, offered free of charge to people who have purchased this book. Go to 360DegreeLeader.com for more information.