10 Ways to Get Your Staff to Love – and Respect – You

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The following ten ways to gain respect from your staff is not the definitive list, but rather drawn from my personal experiences. Adhering to them will set you on the right path to excellence in leadership, but always keep in mind that this is a never-ending process of self-enlightenment and personal growth. What can you add to this list?

#10 – Get to know your staff and their families. This doesn't mean snooping or putting on a false interest, but instead showing genuine interest in those you lead.

#9 – It's okay to change your mind, but if you change direction, make sure that you explain clearly to your team why you did so. It's also advisable to involve your team in setting direction, as well as when it needs to be altered.

#8 – Communicate clearly and regularly. Ensure that your team is up to date on what is going on in the organization. And the best way to do this is face-to-face. Make judicious use of email.

#7- Encourage a learning culture within your team. Show leadership by starting with yourself. Lifelong learning is not a 9 to 5 proposition; it's about how you absorb new experiences at work and through community service, training courses, assignments, reading, travel, etc. It's a reciprocal process: employers provide opportunities to learn and grow, but employees also need to engage in activities outside of work.

#6 – Maintain a careful balance between work and personal interactions with your staff. As much as it's good to do some outside socializing with your team, take particular care as a manager to never be seen as creating favorites, which can occur through social activities.

#5 - Give regular feedback on performance. Be open and honest. Don't whitewash performance reviews; this doesn't help anyone and deludes people (especially newer recruits) into believing that they're doing a good job. But acknowledge and recognize superior performance. And be sure to link performance reviews to learning activities. Performance and learning go hand-in-hand.

#4 - Make generous use of self-deprecating humor. NEVER make fun of others at their expense. This shows your own insecurity. And don't tolerate others making fun of those who may be more vulnerable. Lead by example.

#3 - Share the leadership! Avoid micromanaging your staff. As they gain work experience and grow, keep the tension on by giving more responsibility and leadership opportunities. As manager, park your ego.

#2 – Admit when you screw up and make a point of showing how you've learned from the mistake. This is a powerful way to demonstrate your leadership to your team and to underscore that you're not above them – you're a human being.

#1 – Stand behind your staff during times of difficulty. When your staff make mistakes or get caught up in organizational politics and are in trouble, don't abandon them in an attempt to cover your own ass. If you can't stand behind one of your team members, then you don't belong in management and you're certainly *not* a leader.