

Real Leaders Create More Leaders, Not More Followers

By Dr. Kimberly Alyn

One of the biggest issues facing organizations today is leadership development. Leadership is often defined and interpreted in a variety of ways. One leadership proverb says, “He who thinks he leads but has no followers is only taking a walk.” This is a humorous and true statement. However, real leaders don’t have to ask people to follow them. People naturally want to follow great leaders. The focus of great leaders is not getting more people to follow them; it’s getting more people to become great leaders.

Developing more leaders within your organization starts with developing yourself. Whether you are a formal or informal leader, you need to have a vision and career plan for yourself. I call it a Personal Development Plan, or PDP. If you don’t have one, I would highly recommend developing one. Sit down and map out your vision for the future. Where do you see yourself one year from now? How about five years from now? Ten years? Twenty years? Start writing down what you want your life and your career to look like in the years to come. Once you have done that, you can start coming up with some action points: what you plan to do to ensure this vision comes to fruition. While you’re at it, try writing down some value statements as a leader. Examples of value statements would be:

- “I value integrity”
- “I value professionalism.”
- “I value a strong work ethic.”
- “I value priorities: my family comes before my job.”
- “I value excellence.”
- “I value humor.”

As a leader, you need to make sure that your actions are congruent with your values, or others will not see you as authentic. One of the fastest ways to erode trust as a leader is to say one thing and then do another. People find it difficult to follow leaders who are inconsistent, hypocritical, or phony.

So once you have a well-defined vision for your future, some clear action plans, and you have demonstrated a consistency between your values and your actions, you can start working on developing others. Sit down with the people you want to develop and show them your own PDP. Let them know the steps you have taken and the steps you plan to take to reach your goals and protect your values. Help them to develop their own PDP and guide them in the process.

I have had the opportunity to work with a lot of organizations across the United States. Very few have mentoring programs that are designed to develop outstanding leaders. To develop great leaders in any organization, you need great mentors to set the role model example. You don’t need a formal mentoring program in your organization to make this work (although it would be great to have one). What you need is a willingness to see others developed.

Try serving as a mentor by spending thirty minutes to an hour once a week with your followers. Set up an agenda of what you want to discuss and what you hope to accomplish in each meeting. Lay out a career plan with the person you mentor. Set up actions points to meet those goals.

Stay on track with the important issues. Talk about the mission and vision of the organization and how they directly relate to the person you are mentoring. Talk about the values of the organization and the values of your follower. Talk about your own values and how those relate to the organization. Talk about what your purpose is in the organization and

how everyone's job fits into the "big picture." Talk about ways you can improve as individuals and ways the organization can be improved.

Developing others is not about inundating someone with the policies and procedure of your organization. It's not about training someone in the technical aspects of the job. It's about mentoring them to be great leaders. When you focus on that result, everything else falls into place. Great leaders want to follow policy. Great leaders want to positively impact others. Great leaders have a love and a passion for what they do. Great leaders develop a high level of competence in job performance.

Consider spending some time re-thinking how you define mentoring and what it takes to develop others. A little bit of true mentoring goes a long way in developing great leaders in any organization!

Dr. Kimberly Alyn is a best-selling author and an international professional speaker. She is the author of 11 books including *How to Inspire People to Achieve More*, *How to Deal With Annoying People* (with Bob Phillips, Ph.D.), *Discover your Inner Strength* (with contributors Stephen Covey, Ken Blanchard, and Brian Tracy), and *Men are Slobs, Women are Neat... and other Gender Lies that Damage Relationships* (with Bob Phillips, Ph.D.). She has also developed and produced numerous CD/DVD productions on a variety of topics.

Dr. Alyn has been a contributing author to a variety of magazines and has been quoted in prominent books and publications like *Cosmopolitan*. An advocate of life long learning, Dr. Alyn has her bachelor's degree in business management, her master's degree in organizational management, and her doctorate degree in organizational management with a specialty in leadership. Dr. Alyn has over 20 years of experience with speaking, training, educating, and entertaining audiences.

To find out how to have Dr. Kimberly Alyn come speak at your event or to get more information about Kim, log on to KimAlyn.com.