

What Is the Best Leader Development Advice You Can Give?

The following are very beautiful and wise responses to a survey sent to LDC 2013 participants. The original answers are given with minor editing.

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth.” (John 17:17) In every matter, be it relationships or work situations, always be open to seeking to understand the true reality/truth with all its motivations and consequences. While we are not to judge people, leaders are continually involved in situations where wise judgment is called for. So don't be afraid to ask the tough questions. Peel back the surface and look underneath to see the true causes of the pain and trouble, the joy or celebration that are the grounds of our reality.

Rejection is inevitable at some point by someone – perhaps even our own followers – but the key to a healthy leader is to know at a deep and stable heart level that our Lord Jesus has not rejected us.

Learn what Jesus said and did for the disciples. Follow His steps, like washing the disciples' feet.

Leadership competencies develop as the leaders experience challenges, overcome them and reflect on what the experience has to teach them. This is rarely done intentionally, because so many leaders are so busy with administrative tasks that they don't have *time* to reflect. Connecting the leader with a person or group that can help him or her debrief experiences and talk through problems is the best approach for helping the leader to grow.

Acknowledge the point of true need – the gap between what is and what should be. Then act to achieve effective results.

To be the best leader you can be, the one best thing you can do is to deepen your relationship with Christ. This also applies to all of your relationships. In order to be the best co-worker, friend, brother, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, pastor or trainer, deepen your relationship with Christ.

What is learned is more important than what is taught. Leader-developers often don't realize how much they still have to learn! Humility, a willingness to be

taught, and appreciative inquiry are all essential to become effective leader-developers. They're also essential to life and godliness.

Leading by example – orchestrated by the Holy Spirit – is the organic way of mentoring and coaching leaders.

Leaders will lead best when they are passionate about what they're doing; when it's simply an expression of who they already are and it's not work for them. Look for those who serve as an overflow of their lives and walk alongside them to impart wisdom and help them to be whom they are in Christ.

Capacity-building for staff includes enabling them to succeed and fail but to learn from both.

In John 15:5, Jesus said, "Apart from Me you cannot do anything." If you do not have an ongoing relationship with Christ, all your work, productivity and ministry are illegitimate in God's sight (Hos. 5:7).

Be sure you are learning from others and in turn, passing it on.

Establish a genuine sense of commitment and be open to new ways of accomplishing your task.

Our own development in leadership is not determined by seeking a higher position, but by doing our best in the present one.

Stable leader development blossoms when we start exploring the human resources at hand, not necessarily when we hire experts for the task.

Examine your primary motivations as you lead teams and ministry projects. Do your motivations hold up in the light of Scripture?

Ask and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit each and every second of your life.

Allow for continuous communication, not just at one time or during one training.

Leader development happens in the context of discipleship. Discipling is bringing a person to fulfill God's agenda for his or her life. It's bringing the person to where *God* wants him or her to be, not where *we* want him or her to be.

Discipleship must be given the highest priority.

Building leaders is a life-transformation process in the emerging leader that takes time and demands whole-hearted commitment on the part of existing leaders.

Maintain a good relationship with God.

A leader should honestly know himself.

Aim at holistic development and follow through.

Time does not automatically develop leaders but leadership development always takes time. *There are no short-cuts* to developing effective godly leaders. It requires relational commitment as leaders invest time into the lives of others.

Teach by example.

Maturing leaders need not only to know *what* they believe but to see *how* the Christian life is lived. Teach by example how to love, forgive, encourage, deal with crisis, and be accountable in order to avoid temptation. Share your successes and your failures. Show them your brokenness and weakness, not just your strength. Not by words alone, but by example. Live with them, eat the bread they eat, sleep, laugh and cry with them. It is your example they will follow. The most important value of a teacher, mentor or coach is therefore not his knowledge but his character. Competence can be learned from a textbook; character is formed by true living, Jesus' way. Remind them that being a Christian leader is not about success, competence, or influence, but grace – grace to live through the brokenness, the failures, the trials and tribulations, the rejection by those you lead and love, who will disappoint you, as you will at times disappoint them.

Focus on quality over quantity; relationships over meetings; love over achievements.

Leader development is not primarily about leadership training or skills but about whom you are becoming as a leader. Who you are is how you lead.

Go slowly with a defined plan.

Repent, because the Kingdom of God is at hand. God is about to do something new. Walk together, listen, look, seek.

Look at the real need through the eyes of the potential leaders, in their context. Help the leaders to go through the process of transforming their ministries and overcoming the difficulties they face.

Don't hesitate to teach and train large groups, but the most significant leader development will take place through one-on-one investment over time.

Align yourself with a leader who has attributes different from yours and a leadership style that you can learn from.

Answer to the best of your ability the necessary questions before you start. Observe how leader development already takes place within the group you're serving. Look for and learn from others who might be doing similar types of leader development. Know the difference between training and development.

Remember that you are called to be a servant before being a leader. Leading flows out of who you are in Christ and not by what you do, what you have or what others say about you. The way you lead others must be adorned by a humble spirit that reflects Christ above and beyond any human example or cultural value so that others are encouraged to do the same. Ultimately, everything a leader does and becomes must be placed at the feet of the cross as the paragon example of leading out of complete vulnerability, just as Jesus exemplified and opened a path for us to follow.

1.) Create a culture of honor. 2.) Learn to be a good listener. 3.) Lead from a position of humility and integrity. 4.) Apply reasonable expectations. 5.) Ask the Lord to help you see others through the eyes of their destiny rather than the eyes of their shortcomings or failures.

Who are you training to take your place?

A good leader will have good followers.

Never take yourself too seriously.

Be keen on developing the uniqueness and worth of every leader. Disadvantaged geographical location does not equate to incapacity or lack of worth.

Always focus on radical discipleship and servant leadership with the humility of Christ!

Leader development is not just about conferences or events, but it is relational.

Listen more. Pray more. Focus more.

Focus on being more like Christ. Content transfer will not build Christ-like leaders.

Stay grounded in Jesus (John 15:5)... Let Him be your center of gravity in leadership.

Someone said: if you're about to give a sermon, pray as if you have never preached, and preach as if you had never prayed. Spiritual leadership is the marriage of deep spirituality and well-honed ministry skills – a blending of the divine and the human – a reflection of Christ Himself. We must make sure the impetus and vision for our leadership emerges out of our communion with the Trinity. Anything else obstructs the work of the Spirit. We must make sure our leadership emerges out of the very best in leadership character, vision, knowledge, skills and practices. Anything else obstructs the work of the Spirit. Leadership is a divine-human work. May our leadership offer the best in human leadership skills in the very fullness of the Spirit of Christ.

The fulfillment of God's missional purpose is at the forefront of all leader development in the body of Christ. God develops leaders over a lifetime and we must work closely with the Holy Spirit to help facilitate this process. A biblical mandate, the development of leaders in the body of Christ is a multifaceted process. By closely examining the life and ministry of both Jesus and Paul, we can

learn much about leader development. Though times have changed, the essential ingredients of effective leader development have not. The best leader development happens in the context of God-ordained and directed mission and ministry, in intimate and accountable relationships that encourage close association with established leaders who serve as models, mentors, and apprentice masters, who, in cooperation with the Spirit, facilitate holistic development. Holistic development includes spiritual formation (including the development of character and a Christ-centered life purpose), grounding in Scripture and theology, the development of giftedness and important ministry skills, and integration into appropriate ministry roles in the body of Christ. The disciples were trained in mission for mission through a comprehensive strategy including modeling, engaging and challenging instruction, mentoring, and in-service, on-the-job learning. As they matured, they were gradually entrusted with increasingly important and challenging ministry responsibilities. As Malcolm Webber notes, both content and context are essential for balanced development.

There is no substitute for face-to-face training when it comes to the development of leaders. Training must be done in an atmosphere of relationship and accountability.

Develop and nurture your own intimate walk with God as Father in the regular presence of a small community of emerging leaders. Ask penetrating questions of them, repeat your key teachings, and make it burn (meaning: make the teachings challenging personally and experientially). Get out of the theory-room and onto the playing field as you build these people with the Holy Spirit's help; He will guide you step-by-step. Stop looking for the perfect program and start building those around you to the very best of your ability. Let their progress, set-backs, feed-back, and most importantly, friendship, shape what you do and how you do it. And remember, building leaders takes real time.

Lead by example.

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