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Do you consider yourself a good leader or a great leader? If you're not sure, let me ask you a question: When you have to step away from your role for any reason, do things fall apart? If you answered yes then you are a good leader at best. You lead well but your team is lost without you. If you answered no then you could very well be a great leader. This means you properly developed someone to effectively take your place when you are not on scene.

When you have gained influence with your team or organization, people will consider you a good leader. You get a lot done and are very successful. People like working for you. But it takes more than influence and power to become a great leader. Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others. Success without a successor is ultimately failure. To create anything lasting, to develop a team or organization that can grow and improve, to build anything for the future, a leader's main responsibility is to develop other people: to help them reach their personal potential, to help them do their jobs more effectively, and to help them learn to become better leaders themselves.

People development has a multiplying effect. Teams and organizations go to a whole new level when leaders begin developing others. People development has another positive side effect: loyalty to the leader. People tend to be loyal to the mentor who helps improve their lives. If you are able to watch a leader develop their influence, you will notice how their relationships with others progresses. Initially, people *have* to follow the leader because of the leader's positional power. Then they *want* to follow the leader because of

the leader's capabilities. At some point people *appreciate and admire* the leader because of what he or she has done for the team or organization. Eventually, people *become loyal* to the leader because of what he or she has done for them personally. You win people's hearts and minds by helping them grow personally--and professionally.

Unfortunately, not every appointed leader works to develop other leaders. They are so focused on their own productivity and that of their team that they don't realize they should be developing people. If this describes you, then I have some questions for you to consider that could change your perspective and actions on the matter:

1) *Are you passionate about your own personal growth?* Only growing people are effective at growing others. If you still have that fire within you to learn and improve, people will feel it when they are around you.

2) *Does your growth journey have credibility?* The first thing people ask themselves when you offer to help them grow is whether you have anything to offer that can help them. The key to that answer is your credibility. In their book *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner state: “If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message.”

3) *Are people attracted to you because of your growth?* People want to learn from leaders they see growing and learning. Your growth inspires them to want to grow as well.

4) *Are you successful in the areas where you want to develop others?* You cannot give what you do not have. Don't attempt to develop others on something you don't do very well at all. Have another skilled person do it for you. And sit in on the session!

5) *Are you investing time in those who you want to develop?* Most people spend time *with* others. Few invest time *in* them. If you want to develop people, you need to become an *investor* in people. This means adding value but also expecting to see a return on your investment--not in personal gain, but in impact.

6) *Do you have a teachable way of life?* Teachable people are the best teachers. To develop people, you need to remain teachable. That means wanting to learn, paying attention to what you learn, desiring to share what you learn, and knowing with whom to share it.

7) *Are you willing to be a vulnerable role model and coach?* Developing people by investing in them doesn't mean pretending you have all the answers. It means being authentic, admitting what you don't know as much as what you do, and learning as much as you can from the people you're developing. Learning is a two-way street.

8) *Do the people you develop succeed?* The ultimate goal in developing people is to help them transform their lives. Teaching may help someone's life improve. True development helps an individual's life change. How can you tell if that's happened? The person you've invested in succeeds.

So how did you do answering these questions? The more yeses you answered indicates that you are positioned to develop people. If more answers resulted in a no, don't lose heart. Make growth your goal to set you up for future success as a people developer. You won't regret it because this is where long-term success occurs. Your commitment to developing leaders will ensure ongoing growth in the organization, in the people you lead, and in your leadership impact.

~ The End ~