



When a Flower Doesn't Bloom

Career Development



“When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

– Alexander Den Heijer

Do you have a leadership philosophy? Are you aware of the kind of leader that you are? Or the kind of leader you want to be? If the answer to any of these questions is no, what are you doing to change that? If the answer is yes, what can you do to improve your leadership skills and how can you inspire your employees to become leaders themselves?

Being a leader is not about us, but about those being led. With that said, it is important for us to understand how to develop our employees into the best versions of themselves by creating environments where they can thrive.

I was recently looking for some inspiring quotes to post on one of my social media sites. As I was going through the wide variety of options, a handful really resonated with me. Without followers we are not leaders. Beyond your call of duty, it takes a great leader to create the next generation of leaders.

When people in positions of power are focused on themselves and their goal is solely to gain more power, their team is not as strong as it could be. I won’t argue that your current outlook can’t get things accomplished. But when those in your group are asked whether they have a leader or a boss or whether they are in a group or in a team, you’ll be able to hear, in their own words, that there is untapped potential in the room.

As an organizational development professional, the quote at the top of this column stands out to me

in a way that few concepts about leadership have before. All too often, time, money, and energy is spent on performance plans and employee counseling for those who are not measuring up. Of course, there are instances where taking action with an employee is absolutely appropriate. But before heading down that path, it's important that we take some time and explore the environment where our employees work. If that environment is not consistently producing a thriving workforce, changes in the leadership and to the environment created by that leadership should be considered.

This approach is difficult because it requires us to take a long, hard look at ourselves and make adjustments to the qualities about us that likely resulted in the positions we hold. The level of difficulty, however, doesn't make it any less crucial that we do it.

The quotes below by no means encapsulate the entirety of leadership thought, but they do provide us with some food for thought and give us a target at which to aim. They individually and collectively provide a road map to help us be the kind of leaders who will bring out the best in our employees.

1. "If serving is below you, leadership is beyond you." – Anonymous
2. "We rise by lifting others." – Robert Ingersoll
3. "Good leadership isn't about advancing yourself. It's about advancing your team." – John C. Maxwell
4. "There's no need to be perfect to inspire others. Let people get inspired by how you deal with your imperfections." – Ziad K. Abdelnour
5. "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and be more, you are a leader." – John Quincy Adams
6. "A leader's job is to look into the future and see the organization, not as it is, but as it should be." – Jack Welch
7. "Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence." – Sheryl Sandberg
8. "If your audience isn't listening, it's not their fault. It's yours." – Seth Godin
9. "Become the kind of leaders that people would follow voluntarily; even if you had no title or position." – Brian Tracy
10. "If you delegate tasks, you create followers. If you delegate authority, you create leaders." – Craig Groeschel

If you are leading by the aforementioned principles but still have problems with one employee, then maybe that flower needs fixing.

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