



Ted Lasso's Leadership Lessons

Career Development



Warning: Spoiler alert for those who haven't watched the show yet

Ted Lasso is a show about an American football coach who moves to the United Kingdom to coach the other kind of football (soccer). Yawn! When my friend recommended this show to me, I put off watching it because I'm not the sportiest person. Now that I've watched it, I'm furious with myself for not jumping on the *Ted Lasso* bandwagon sooner. What a wholesome show full of heart, humanity, compassion, and decency. As a big fan, I want to share with you what Ted has taught me about leadership.

Ted is an ethical leader

An ethical leader carries oneself with integrity and honesty at all times, but also role models this behavior proactively and expects others to be accountable for unethical actions. When Jamie Tartt, a talented yet immature player, taunts other team members and wants to skip practice, Ted delivers a stern and direct speech to Jamie in front of the team. Ted tells Jamie he is supposed to lead by example, yet he shoves that all aside. By delivering this speech, Ted also holds Jamie accountable for his past unethical behavior.

Be accountable, be a team player, be ethical.



Jason Sudeikis plays the titular character.

Ted is an emotionally intelligent and authentic leader

As the self-labeled optimist, Ted is compassionate, empathetic, and authentic leader who inspires hope and optimism. A famous Lasso-ism Ted tells us is to “be curious, not judgmental.” As Ted makes a bet with the former football club owner Rupert over a game of darts, Ted shares his lesson that all those people who used to belittle him *judged* everything. Not one of them was *curious* that their underestimation of him had nothing to do with who he was.

In order to understand others better, inspire hope, let us learn from Ted to ask questions, listen, and keep learning.

Ted is a brave leader

Brave leaders are able to convert adversity into strength, and lead teams through unforeseen uncertainty and change. Ted is brave enough to tell the team they were broken and they needed change. Ted rightly told them, though change can be scary, most times change is a good thing and embracing change is about being brave.

Belief in the team can lead to positive outcomes.

Ted is human

Despite all the amazing qualities and skills Ted has, the thing I love the most is that Ted is human. Not a superhero, not a caricature of perfection, but a human being with panic attacks, flaws, and fears. Gone are yesteryear's expectations of a leader being infallible, perfect, know-it-all, always under control. As unconventional as Ted may be, Ted is a true leader for today and tomorrow.

A leader who is cognizant and open about their emotions and vulnerabilities, who listens and cares, who embraces uncertainty, admits their mistakes, inspires us all to be a decent human at work and outside of work.

Ted Lasso airs on the [Apple TV+ streaming service](#).

[Kelly Xiao](#)



Asia Pacific Employment Director

Syneos Health

[Kelly Xiao](#) is the Asia Pacific (APAC) Employment Director, Counsel, at Syneos Health. Syneos Health embraces and celebrates all employees' differences and she provides labor and employment advice to business and human resources across APAC to reflect this important value. As an Asian Australian, she believes that opportunities and mentorship are important in overcoming the racial barriers in career progression of professionals with multicultural backgrounds in Australia. She is passionate about leading with integrity and believes that in-house counsel has a critical role to play in promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion in the workplace. She is the ACC Australia Young Achiever Lawyer of the Year 2019.