

the manager

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37 years, 46 trophies and more than 2,000 games later, Sir Alex Ferguson tells all

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The increasing importance of customer service

"You can't be sentimental in this job" SIR ALEX FERGUSON



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MINDGAMES

IN THE FIRST IN A REGULAR SERIES LOOKING AT THE MENTAL CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP EXPERT STEVE RADCLIFFE OUTLINES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP AND WHY THE LATTER PRODUCES BETTER RESULTS

STOP MANAGING... START LEADING

I'VE JUST HAD a meeting with a man called Phil. He's a senior manager in a major organisation who's just been promoted into a key leadership position. Trouble is, he's struggling.

I've met lots of 'Phils' during my 20 years of helping people in business, sport, government, education, etc grow as leaders. Most of them have devoted thousands of hours to learning and mastering their technical skill (whether it be finance, teaching, playing football or whatever), but they've spent far less time learning how to lead (and often, no time at all). The result is that they can be daunted by this 'leadership stuff' and don't know how to lead, rather than just manage.

My team and I have one overriding ambition... to help people grow quickly as leaders. We do this by making sure they've grasped just a few big ideas and then are doing something with them. There are lots of people who will present leadership as a complicated, even mysterious, topic involving lots of complex models and ideas. Don't believe them.

In contrast, the following are five of our plain and simple ideas we make sure leaders grasp to give themselves the very best chance of succeeding. How many of these do you think you have already taken on board?

1 Understand that leading is not an advanced form of managing. Yes, whatever your job, you'll need to do some managing, but leading is different. It comes from a deeper place. Managing is about attending to what you have in place and making sure it runs well. Leading is about creating something great in the future. It's about having high ambitions and helping others have them, too. Managing alone won't get you to greatness, but leading can. Every day, the world will throw emails, phone calls and meetings at you that will pull you into the managing space and take you away from energising your team and bringing the best out of them. At all times, be conscious of when you're managing and when you're leading. Most of us spend too little time leading.

2 To be a great leader, you have to find your magic ingredient. We have found this ingredient in every effective leader we have worked with. It's not a job title, personality type or technique... it's that all of them are 'up to something'. That is, they are alive with an ambition, a dream, vision or goal that matters to them.

There's something in the future they want and they're going for it. This gives them an energy and vitality. It has them strive to be the best and get the best from others around them. This is where leadership starts, with you in touch with what you care about and being 'up to something'. How often are you energised by what you're up to?

3 Leading is not just about communicating; it's about engaging. Once you're clear on what you're up to, a large part of leading is about interacting with others so you leave them wanting to build something with you. This is engagement... and it's different to 'communicating to', 'presenting at' and 'telling'. When you engage people, they'll go the extra mile for you. When you don't, they may go along with you, but you're not getting their very best. What do you try to achieve in your interactions? Clear communication or engagement?

4 Be aware that, as a leader, you're always having an impact. Just before writing this piece I read an interview with Dimitar Berbatov where he explained that

there are quite a few jokers in the Manchester United dressing room, but it all goes quiet when Sir Alex walks in. The nugget here is that when you're in a position of power or influence in an organisation, you constantly have an impact on the people around you, how they feel and what they believe is possible. In our terms you are always either 'shining your light' or 'casting your shadow'. But here's the catch...

5 You won't always know what your impact is. There is sometimes a huge difference between the impact we want to have on others (our 'Impact Intended') and how we actually leave them feeling (our 'Impact Felt'). The truth is that we can't always work out our Impact Felt; we can only learn about it by asking others. So how well do you know the impact of your light and your shadow on others? Who have you invited in to give you feedback on your impact? You must know when your shadow is getting in the way of your engaging others and getting the best from them.

And finally, the good news is that there is a way you can become a more effective leader quickly. We now know that growing as a leader is less about implementing complex ideas and more about practice. Indeed, why should it be any different to anything else we aim to master? We learn anything fastest if we have some guidance and a few ideas up front, then put in lots of practice and get regular feedback on how we're doing.

You can be better at being up to something and going for a future you want, better at engaging others, and better at impacting others so they want to be at their best and deliver for you. Which aspects of leadership are you going to practise? ❧



ABOUT STEVE RADCLIFFE

Steve Radcliffe has been coaching senior leaders in the worlds of business, government, sport, health and education for 20 years. His personal clients have included Sir Gus O'Donnell, head of the Civil Service, and the top leaders in organisations such as the BBC, Boots, Eon, the FA, First Direct and Unilever. Radcliffe is best known for his simple approach to leadership, called 'Future - Engage - Deliver'. He has captured the approach in his book, *Leadership Plain and Simple*, which is Amazon UK's number one book on the subject of leadership.