

## The Golden Rules of Leadership and Relationships

Years ago, early in my career in New York City, I attended a Dale Carnegie training program and found it very helpful. The two fellows who taught our program were amazing. I was totally taken by their quiet confidence, poise and ability to communicate.

Here I am many years later, now a leadership consultant and coach. I am an ardent believer in reading leadership books like Carnegie's enduring classic, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, which was written in 1937 and still holds true! In fact I strongly encourage executives and up and comers to read one leadership book a month for inspiration and ideas. The good news today is that these books tend to be easy reads, maybe 150 to 200 pages, and they often use stories to validate their messages. I find I always get at least a few great ideas and a whole lot of inspiration that I eagerly share with those with whom I work.

Like most people, I love the theory that simple is sensible. That's exactly what *How to Win Friends* is, the basics of leadership, and it makes so much sense. In fact, I fervently believe it makes even more sense today than when it was written 76 years ago.

I'll mention below some of the "golden rules" that are Mr. Carnegie's principles. These were keys to success then, always have been, and just think how vital they are now in our crazy busy world when so many, unfortunately most, senior managers are nearly constantly in meetings, on their computers, conference calls, in conversation in the C-suites, and traveling,

What would I like to see? I'd like them to be out of their offices, having conversations with their external clients, of course, and with their internal clients, the people in their company, all the people, not just with other senior executives.

To be very successful consistently, year after year, leaders must make conversations a top priority. Quality conversations that treat them as teammates and show a genuine interest in them.

Think about these golden rules offered by Dale Carnegie, and these are just some examples:

- Don't criticize or complain
- Give honest, sincere appreciation
- Be genuinely interested in other people
- Remember and call people by their name
- Be a good listener
- Encourage others to talk about themselves
- Help others feel important, and do it sincerely
- Show respect for another person's opinions
- Begin in a friendly way
- Use encouragement

- Let others do a great deal of the talking
- Let people think the ideas are theirs
- Try to understand what others think and their reasoning

To me, these are the ABCs of leadership, the fundamentals. If we abide by these rules, with sincerity, because we genuinely care about our people and are not self-absorbed, those on our team will very likely look up to us and be motivated to do their very best work, going the extra mile when needed.

We must bear in mind the importance of asking open-ended questions, asking people for their ideas, opinions, input, and feedback. We'll learn a lot and our people will feel appreciated. This is very much of a success factor as the information we learn will improve our picture of success.

There is also the very effective approach of leadership by questioning. For example when someone asks what action we should take, ask that person what she recommends and why. Leadership by questioning helps our people learn and grow. And isn't that our responsibility as a boss, as a leader?

By embodying these golden rules, we'll have a winning team and organizational culture.

One highly effective leader, Alex Elmore, COO of Billy Casper Golf, recently mentioned an idea that I absolutely applaud. He and each of his team members are going to read *How to Win Friends* and then have a roundtable discussion about the ideas and how they can use them to improve, individually and as a team.

Yes, leadership can be simple, utilizing the basics of how to treat others and have solid relationships. Actually, this is why I named my business Common Sense Leadership. I credit my coach, Mary Mavis, as she mentioned the idea to me, and I fully embraced it. While business is complicated, and managing our time is challenging, I do believe that leadership is basic, it's common sense: it's about our earning the respect of our people and continuing to earn relationships founded on trust.

Just recently, while reading a paper, I highlighted, "A manager likes to talk, a leader likes to listen," and, "A manager thinks first about numbers, while a leader thinks first about people."

I hope these golden rules ring true to you, as they do for me, even more so some 40 years after Carnegie's debut in my life.

## About The Author



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