

10 TIPS FOR STEPPING INTO YOUR LEADERSHIP



Written by Amanda Meeson, Vice President of Programming at The Leadership Program

The role of a leader is one of great responsibility. These tips can help us fully step in with intention, dedication and courage.

1 PRACTICE APPRECIATION FOR YOUR TEAM, YOUR STAFF, YOUR COLLEAGUES, YOUR BOSS, YOUR SCHOOL, YOUR ORGANIZATION AND THOSE YOU SERVE.

Appreciation and recognition are key to us feeling motivated in the workplace.

2 UNITE BEHIND YOUR COMMON PURPOSE.

Whether it is values, your mission statement, or a team mantra—people thrive when grounded by a common purpose. As a leader, work to create not just a team, but a tribe.

3 NORMALIZE A CULTURE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK, BOTH CONSTRUCTIVE AND CORRECTIVE.

This can foster a culture of learning, growth and development for all. And the feedback is for leaders, too—how can we solicit feedback from our staff?

4 COMMUNICATE WITH CARE.

Especially in our increasingly digital world, our ability to communicate carefully and effectively is critical. Pay attention to greetings—and tone—in both written and verbal messages, in addition to the messages we send nonverbally. Give your team your attention

when and where it is most needed.

5 BALANCE YOUR TEAM-TIME.

Although there is always a lot of information to distribute when we meet with our staff, resist the urge to spend most of your time talking at them. Create a healthy balance and ensure there is also time spent on sharing successes, addressing challenges and partaking in activities that support team-building and group dynamics.

6 LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

Echoing our beloved Ghandi, Be the change you wish to see. Enter each day with the same intention, dedication and hustle you want to see exemplified from your staff.

7 STUDY UP.

An empathetic, effective leader knows his or her team. We know what's going on with them, what they need, how they may respond to something or the best way for them to receive information. Make one-on-one time to get to know them. What motivates them? What are their personal/professional goals? We won't be able to tailor every aspect of their work experience, but we can work to create conditions where they can thrive.

HOLD THE BAR HIGH. Having high expectations can be relatively easy for leaders. The harder part is threefold: ensuring you have clearly communicated the expectations, then providing what is needed for success, then being at the ready to help if obstacles get in the way.

GET OUT OF THE WAY. Communicate clear expectations and strong measurable goals, and empower staff with the tools they need to achieve. Then, get out of their way. It's important people feel they have a voice, a contribution and a sense of autonomy. This supports confidence building, morale and

employee effectiveness. Someone once said, "We have two ears and one mouth for a reason." Where can we stop talking and just listen? Where can we ask more questions?

BE OF SERVICE. Stepping into your leadership comes with a variety of daily challenges, difficult conversations, and tasks that make our heads hurt. When times feel tough, it can be helpful to ask yourself, "Who am I in service to?" It may be to an employee, to your team, to the students, families or schools we serve, or to your organization's reputation. Anchor yourself in service.

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SEE MORE AT: <http://naaweb.org/professional-development/item/518-step-into-your-leadership>

OPENING DISCUSSION

Which of these tips do you feel like you are successfully implementing into your leadership style?

What techniques you use for appreciating your staff members?

Which of these tips do you feel like is the most challenging? What strategies have you used to attempt to implement the tip?

How would you describe your leadership style?

APPLICATION ACTIVITY *(use the following or create additional scenarios related to your work)*

It is two weeks before school year programs start, you have many reminders for your staff to ensure they are prepared. How do you provide a good balance to your meeting so that it includes reminders, planning, reflection, and group discussion?

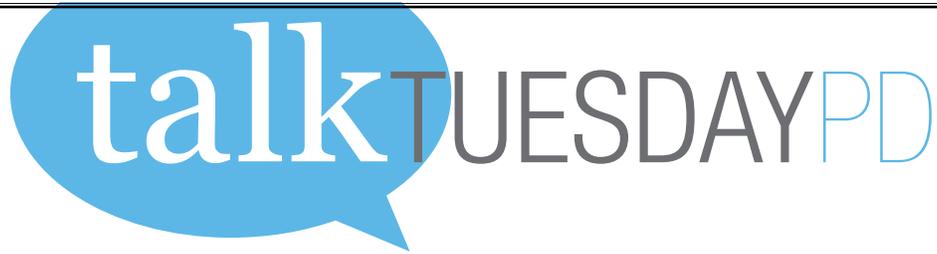
You have a new staff member that you are training. The program runs smoothly, but has high family expectations which means that it is important for staff to be strong caregivers. How do you train a new hire through their first couple of months, but still manage to hear their perspective, have them contribute to the program and have a sense of autonomy?

CLOSING REFLECTION

What is a goal you would like to set for yourself regarding your leadership? What are the ways to do it?

What is one other leadership tip that you feel is valuable to you as a leader or that you would want your boss to possess?

CERTIFICATE of PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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_____ **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS, EARNED BY:**

CONTENT INCLUDED:

Practicing appreciation • Uniting behind your common purpose • Normalizing a culture of giving and receiving feedback • Communicating with care • Balancing your team-time • Leading by example • Holding the bar high • Being of service

FACILITATOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

| List three steps toward stepping into your leadership role?

- a.
- b.
- c.

| Normalize a culture of giving and receiving feedback can foster a culture of _____

| What is the key component to holding high expectations?

- a. Ensuring you have clearly communicated the expectations
- b. Providing what is needed for success
- c. Being at the ready to help if obstacles get in the way
- d. All of the above

Supports Content Area 10, Levels 1-4 of the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals