

COMPLETE WORKS OF LEADERSHIP FREAK

FOR JANUARY 2020

By

Dan Rockwell

**Bonus: the top 5
posts of 2019!!**

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About:

I believe you are who you were when you were 13 years old. That makes me a dairy farmer from Maine. I still rise early and believe in the value of old-fashioned work.

I currently live in Central Pennsylvania with my High School sweetheart. We've been married over 40 years. We have three children and five grandchildren.

I travel from Central Pennsylvania to deliver keynotes and workshops. I also coach leaders both face-to-face and via video conference.

I continue to learn the importance and value of building solid relationships.

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION:	5
5 Most Read posts of 2019	6
#5 POST OF 2019: THE TOP TEN TOXIC BEHAVIORS OF LOUSY LEADERS	6
Top Ten toxic Behaviors of Lousy Leaders:	6
#1. Neglecting relationships.....	6
#2. Tolerating bad apples.....	6
#3. Avoiding tough conversations.....	6
#4. Making feedback conversations personal.	6
#5. Spending too much time focused on problems.	7
#6. Never apologizing.....	7
#7. Failing to see the good side of bad qualities.....	7
#8. Hiding behind weaknesses and faults.....	7
#9. Listening too little and talking too much.	7
#10. Listening with a critical fault-finding attitude.....	7
#4 POST OF 2019: THE SINGLE BIGGEST FACTOR IN LONG-TERM ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS	8
Factors of organizational success:	8
Managers:	8
Boss to coach:	8
3 tips for shifting from boss to coach:	9
#1. Understand the dance between freedom and intervention.	9
#2. Overcome the most difficult shift.	9
#3. Practice accountability that energizes people.	9
#3 POST OF 2019: 7 FACES OF DISTRUST	10
7 faces of distrust:.....	10
10 traits of trustful teammates:.....	10
3 ways to rebuild eroded trust:	11
#2 POST OF 2019: HOW TO HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE WITH COMPASSION	12
A comment:.....	12
Accountability AND compassion:.....	12

The language of accountability AND compassion:..... 13

#1 POST OF 2019: THE 12 TOUGHEST CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP14

The 12 Toughest Challenges of Leadership: 14

You not situations: 15

Building the team:..... 15

Top talent wants to:..... 15

Key qualities:..... 15

Table of quotes16

SAMPLE

INTRODUCTION:

My goal is writing the most concise actionable leadership articles available. On average, it will take you about **two minutes** to read one of the articles in this collection. As you read, it's my hope that you find a bit of actionable insight for immediate implementation.

My second goal in writing Leadership Freak is igniting personal growth. People lie to leaders. We even lie to ourselves. I work to be honest, first with myself, and second you. Rest assured that any kick in the pants you might feel is first felt by me.

My goal in offering a compilation is **convenience**. All the articles that follow were published online. You can read them for free on my blog. To enhance convenience, the table of contents links to the exact spot in the article you're interested in reading.

Printing is another point of convenience. Readers often print relevant articles. It's my hope that this format makes printing easier.

I'm particularly delighted to offer the **table of quotes** (TOQ). It's a pleasure to offer leadership insights in punchy short statements. As you peruse the TOQ, if something piques your interest, just click it, and you'll go directly to that quote in the appropriate article.

In service to the leadership community,

Dan Rockwell
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5 Most Read posts of 2019

#5 POST OF 2019: THE TOP TEN TOXIC BEHAVIORS OF LOUSY LEADERS

“Most leaders don’t need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop.” Peter Drucker

Top Ten toxic Behaviors of Lousy Leaders:

#1. Neglecting relationships.

A short conversation about someone’s family while getting coffee isn’t a waste of time.

If you want great results, build strong relationships.

#2. Tolerating bad apples.

Time makes bad apples rot.

Bad apples don’t ripen with time. Your team is waiting for you to reassign, retrain, or remove people who don’t fit or don’t contribute.



#3. Avoiding tough conversations.

Bad gets worse when you avoid it.

Try saying, “I noticed...,” when the topic is uncomfortable. Describe it. Don’t judge it.

#4. Making feedback conversations personal.

Don’t criticize someone’s character. Describe behavior and impact. “When you (behavior) the team (impact).”

#5. Spending too much time focused on problems.

Fixing is a backward-facing activity.

It's necessary to fix problems, but the future is built by seizing opportunities.

#6. Never apologizing.

"I was wrong," builds more trust than self-justification or excuses.

#7. Failing to see the good side of bad qualities.

The things that irritate you about others may reveal strengths.

A slow decision-maker may be great with details.

#8. Hiding behind weaknesses and faults.

"That's just the way I am," is a leader's way of saying get used to me interrupting you, for example. The other sentence to listen for is, "I'm just not good at that."

#9. Listening too little and talking too much.

Listening saves time. Stop answering questions that aren't being asked. Bloviating leaders suck the life out of teams. Jumping to conclusions diminishes others.

#10. Listening with a critical fault-finding attitude.

Explore other people's imperfect ideas.

Most people don't need to get their way. They just need to be heard.

Bonus:

1. Hoarding good jobs and delegating crap assignments.
2. Defining yourself by your successes and others by their failures.
3. Believing success is transferable.
4. Neglecting culture.

What's on your top ten toxic behavior list?

Bonus material:

8 Traits of Toxic Leadership to Avoid ([Psychology Today](#))

The 20 Bad Habits ([Goldsmith](#))

[Table of contents](#)

#4 POST OF 2019: THE SINGLE BIGGEST FACTOR IN LONG-TERM ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

“What ultimately constrains the performance of your organization is not its business model, nor its operating model, but its management model.” ([The Future of Management](#), Gary Hamel)

Factors of organizational success:

Jim Collins says the key factors for success include:

1. Getting the *right people* on the bus
2. Getting the right people in the right seats.
3. Getting the wrong people off the bus.
4. Level 5 leadership – Humble leaders with indomitable will. ([Good to Great](#))



Managers:

“Gallup finds that the quality of managers and team leaders is the single biggest factor in your organization’s long-term success.” ([It’s the Manager](#))

Organizations ask, “How do managers get more out of people?”

“Ironically, the management model encapsulated in this question virtually guarantees that a company will never get the best out of its people. Vassals and conscripts may work hard, but they don’t work willingly.” [Gary Hamel](#)

Boss to coach:

The BEST managers are coaches, not bosses. [Jim Clifton and Jim Harter](#) say there are three requirements of coaching.

1. Establish expectations.
2. Continually coach.
3. Create accountability.

3 tips for shifting from boss to coach:

#1. Understand the dance between freedom and intervention.

Give high performers freedom. Intervene if performance lags.

Intervention isn't oppression or punishment. It might mean weekly one-on-ones, instead of monthly.

#2. Overcome the most difficult shift.

Solving problems for talented people devalues their talent.

Over-helpfulness sucks the life out of talented people. Stop giving quick answers.

Coaches help people find their own answers. The old style of management, when people were tools, is to give them answers and expect conformity.

#3. Practice accountability that energizes people.

Accountability that energizes is self-imposed. We need to rise above the false notion that we can force people into high performance.

Noticing is healthy accountability. Walk around noticing performance as it relates to expectation.

Work that isn't noticed goes down in value.

What factors enhance long-term organizational success?

How might managers bring out the best in people?

Added material: [Coaching as a Management Style](#), by Zenger and Stinnett

[Table of contents](#)

#3 POST OF 2019: 7 FACES OF DISTRUST



A reader asks, “Maybe a post on how to proceed when relationships have been eroded among team members? With a small team, I find it especially challenging.”

Trust is the engine of team performance.

7 faces of distrust:

- #1. Tearing down the people you should build up.
 - #2. Wishing failure on people instead of celebrating their success.
 - #3. Viewing team members as enemies instead of allies.
 - #4. Self-protection and defensiveness.
 - #5. Surprises during performance reviews.
 - #6. Planning-meetings that exclude input from the people who are impacted by the plans.
 - #7. Constant rule-making. Distrustful teams use rules to protect themselves from each other.
- Bonus: Hidden agendas.

10 traits of trustful teammates:

- #1. Know, honor, and celebrate the top three strengths of everyone on the team.
- #2. Talk openly about weaknesses. (A person who has no weakness is self-deceived and untrustworthy. They will blame you to protect their image.)
- #3. Enjoy playful mischief. One organization gives the “Duck Butt” award. This year it went to a person who hit the overhang of a drive-through with a company vehicle.
- #4. Ask forgiveness. “I was wrong,” builds trust.

- #5. Express sincere enthusiasm for another's success.
- #6. Speak about others as if they are in the room, when they aren't.
- #7. Assume others have good intentions. Trust gives the benefit of the doubt.
- #8. Protect each other's best interests. Self-protection weakens relationships.
- #9. Examine personal responsibilities before finger-pointing.
- #10. Open their mouths to build-up.

3 ways to rebuild eroded trust:

- #1. Define trust.

It's impossible to build trust if you haven't defined it in theoretical, practical, and emotional terms.

- #2. Describe trustworthy behaviors.

You need to know the actions that express trust and the unacceptable behaviors that violate trust.

- #3. Extend trust before it's earned.

[Distrust is earned. Trust is given.](#)

We are all trust-givers.

Trust is given every time you drive on the freeway or walk down an airbridge to your seat on a plane.

What are some faces of distrust that you have seen?

How might teams build/rebuild trust?

Bonus material:

The Speed of Trust ([Covey](#))

Ten Ways to Build Trust on Your Team ([Forbes](#))

Why trust is critical to team success ([CCL](#))

Building Trust Inside Your Team ([Mindtools](#))

[Table of contents](#)

#2 POST OF 2019: HOW TO HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE WITH COMPASSION

Pushovers prolong helplessness, failure, and mediocrity. But accountability with compassion fuels boldness, growth, and productivity.

You demonstrate respect for people when you hold them accountable.

Accountability says behaviors matter. Who wants to live in a world where actions have no consequences?

Lack of compassion creates fear.



A comment:

One commenter on Leadership Freak writes,

“I had a controversial conversation with an invested social worker yesterday. They were trying to fix a problem that a teenager got himself into.

He broke into the social worker’s facility. She wanted to drop the charges because she thought he had potential.

What lesson is he learning from being free of the charges?” (edited for content)

Accountability AND compassion:

Don't shoot your wounded.

Choose accountability AND compassion, not accountability OR compassion. Accountability without compassion is detached, distant, and disheartening.

Accountability is about personal responsibility. But you can support people when they face negative consequences.

When someone screws up, stand with them, but don't encourage irresponsibility.

Compassion is most relevant when people are down. Don't compound failures by keeping your distance when people are paying the piper.

Get your hands dirty. Compassion takes time, energy, and patience.

If your goal is development, help people come out better on the other side of failure. Don't stand aloof.

The language of accountability AND compassion:

1. I know this is hard. I'm standing with you.
2. I can't make this go away. But I'll help you get through it.
3. I'm sorry we had to terminate you. Let me help you find a new job. (Depending on the reason for termination.)
4. Yes, you've lost trust. Let's find some ways to help you earn trust again.

Accountability isn't cruel when you walk with people after they screw up.

A second chance has meaning when people take responsibility for their failures.

How might leaders practice accountability with compassion?

What are the limits of compassion?

Bonus material:

["3 Simple Steps to Hold People Accountable"](#)

["Assess your compassion"](#) (HBR)

(In a prior version of this post I used the term "compassionate accountability," which in the context of personal development is a registered trademark of Next Element Consulting LLC, <https://next-element.com/conflict-without-casualties/>. I make no claim of ownership to that mark.)

[Table of contents](#)

#1 POST OF 2019: THE 12 TOUGHEST CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP



The challenges of leadership are *inside* leaders. Stop blaming organizations and others for your shortfalls and failures.

Take the bull by the horns. *You* are the bull.

The 12 Toughest Challenges of Leadership:

1. Humility during success.
2. Confidence during setbacks.
3. Stepping back so others can step up.
4. Putting plans into action – Follow through. Experience shows up to 90 percent of strategic plans never achieve execution.
5. Leading change. *Leaders don't just do things, they change things.*
6. Admitting mistakes. One contributor suggests that self-awareness and honesty are essential to saying, "I was wrong." (See more comments on [Facebook](#))
7. Listening with the goal of learning.
8. Encouraging constructive dissent.
9. Learning from criticism.
10. Asking for feedback.
11. Maintaining focus on the future.
12. Building the team.

You not situations:

Leadership challenges always involve changing situations. You, however, are the common factor. Your ability to lead yourself is your greatest ability.

Situations come and go but you are always there.

Building the team:

Produce the most fruit by leading yourself to build the team. Success depends on your ability to attract, develop, and retain top talent.

How to spot top talent?

Top talent wants to:

1. Know where you are going so they can find alignment. Tell them the goal?
2. Develop plans with you. Once they align with the goal, don't give them the plan, develop it with them. *Top talent wants a hand in making plans.*
3. Make meaningful contribution. They ask, "Where do I fit in?" They need meaningful contribution. Drifting isn't enough for top talent.
4. Work with others. Lone Rangers have a place, but never on great teams.
5. Rise to challenges.

Key qualities:

Determine the nonnegotiable qualities you expect from your team members. Go with their strengths; compensate for their weaknesses.

What are the toughest challenges of leadership?

What qualities do great team members possess?

Note: This post was originally published in 2012. However it was the most viewed post of 2019.

[Table of contents](#)

Table of quotes

“Most leaders don’t need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop.” Peter Drucker	6
If you want great results, build strong relationships.	6
Time makes bad apples rot.	6
Bad gets worse when you avoid it.	6
It’s necessary to fix problems, but the future is built by seizing opportunities.	7
“I was wrong,” builds more trust than self-justification or excuses.	7
The things that irritate you about others may reveal strengths.	7
Most people don’t need to get their way. They just need to be heard.	7
“What ultimately constrains the performance of your organization is not its business model, nor its operating model, but its management model.” (The Future of Management, Gary Hamel)	8
“Gallup finds that the quality of managers and team leaders is the single biggest factor in your organization’s long-term success.” (It’s the Manager)	8
Give high performers freedom. Intervene if performance lags.	9
Solving problems for talented people devalues their talent.	9
Work that isn’t noticed goes down in value.	9
Trust is the engine of team performance.	10
You demonstrate respect for people when you hold them accountable.	12
Lack of compassion creates fear.	12
Don’t shoot your wounded.	12
Accountability isn’t cruel when you walk with people after they screw up.	13

[Table of contents](#)