

### **Leader Theme: Positively Relating**

The first priority of an outstanding leader is to build positive relationships with individuals. This person has multiple strategies to communicate how to work through various issues in a resourceful way. This person is highly empathetic to the thoughts and feelings of individuals.

### **Leader Attribute: Empathy**

This leader listens to and validates individuals who express both the peaks and valleys of emotions. This person is receptive and seeks to understand the uniqueness of the individual's situation. This leader builds a connection with individuals to help them know they are not alone in their thoughts and feelings. This connection enables individuals to become increasingly resourceful in their life journey.

### **Research Connection**

Forming emotional bonds with employees has increased in importance for organizational leaders. Leaders need to have these bonds to help build awareness of the relationships and undercurrents within their buildings. Having emotional bonds allows leaders to help employees and other leaders stay aligned and focused during times of uncertainty.

Leaders can use the information gathered through emotional bonds to address current and potential problems that may have not surfaced, but could create discord. Organizational leaders are encouraged to identify clues of opportunities and emerging threats. This allows them to be more aware of personal needs of employees, while acknowledging significant events in their lives.

### **Action Learning, Applying Crown Attributes**

If you are a leader dedicated to supporting your employees during challenging times, it can be tempting to offer unsolicited advice or support. Giving advice or support without empathy during emotional situations has the potential to increase the emotional response from the other person and make an already sensitive situation worse.

You might believe this demonstrates support as a leader. However, this may give others the impression that you are more focused on giving advice rather than understanding the person's emotional response to the issue.

*If you want to be helpful as an adult developer, try showing empathy by validating the emotional feelings before you begin to offer ways you can support employee needs.*

- When meeting with employees, listen to their issues and respond to them at the feeling level first. Then offer assistance.
- Invite employees to open up about important issues. This can help you gain insights on how to improve the work environment and support their emotional needs.
- Take every opportunity to listen and validate the way others may feel in times of uncertainty, and challenge to help them feel valued and heard.

## **Egghead Alert! Go deeper into the research**

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