

Leader Theme: Positive 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: Rapport

This leader radiates a commitment to build and maintain positive connections with others resulting in trust and mutual understanding. Relationship building with others emphasizes one-to-one open sharing that is mutually beneficial. When working through difficult situations, this person recognizes the opportunity to generate a deeper and more meaningful appreciation for individuals involved.

Research Connection

Excellent leaders gain an awareness of the personal lives of employees, helping foster their relationships. It is recommended that leaders rely heavily on face-to-face relationships rather than through routines steeped in process. Leaders must cross over from simply being formal observers in the department or organization to encouraging employees. It can be as simple as asking how they are doing while offering support in their daily needs.

In an environment of accountability connected to rewards and punishments, the most powerful incentives are face-to-face relationships among the people in organization. Fostering relationships with employees helps them stay aligned and focused with leaders, especially during times of uncertainty. These relationships allow leaders to be informed about significant personal issues and needs of the employees they serve. It is the responsibility of an organization's leaders to be intentional about building mutual relationships and trust with employees.

Action Learning, Applying Crown Attributes

If you are a leader who wants to be a resource to employees, it's easy to focus on yourself first to show others how your knowledge, experience, and actions can meet their needs or expectations. This tends to focus on building trust through action... and on you.

Others may be impressed that you are a reliable person who gets things done, however the actual relationship becomes a bit task minded and shallow when getting to know the other person.

If you want to be helpful as an adult developer, try building trust by investing time in knowing others as a person, allowing you bring out the best in them as a professional:

- When meeting someone for the first time, lead with listening and asking questions to help you know what's important to the other person.
- Then introduce yourself so you can tactfully connect your talents or responsibilities with their needs.
- Use difficult situations it as an opportunity to build relationship through mutual understanding rather than being defensive.

Egghead Alert! Go deeper into the research

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999). Principals' instructional leadership and teacher development: Teachers' perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35(3), 349-380.

Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. New York, NY: Albert Shanker Institute

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Fink, E., & Resnick, L. B. (2001). Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(8), 598-626.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Aurora, CO: McRel.