



Simple

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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I had two great leadership experiences lately that I wanted to share. They weren't individuals that had hundreds reporting to them, nor was it an earthshaking crisis response. However, both situations personified the personal attention that leaders should engender and exemplify.

The backstory on both:

I have various abilities. Most people do. One of them is not finding directions well. Within our family it is a running joke. I also happen to be married to someone with the directional abilities of a salmon. Once she has been to a place, she never get lost. Ever. She even disagrees with the onboard navigation many times... and wins....which has led me to be quite lazy in this regard. She just gets us places. Has worked well for 34 years.





A couple of weeks back I was at a hospital for a meeting...alone. My first on-site since March. To find nursing administration, I always go through the north doors. Due to Covid, they now have a single entrance policy. When asked if I knew where I was going, I gave a confident "yes" headed to the basement, and got lost in the catacombs.....So, following my policy of never wandering for more than a few minutes, I wandered over to the nearest door and knocked. It happened to be the lab.

Now the lab is a busy place in this Covid environment. They have lots of duties on their plate, none of them involving helping lost individuals.

A pleasant person came to the door and I explained my situation. She said that she was also new and needed to ask. She quickly came back and said the magic leadership phrase of:

"Let me show you where you need to go"...

What could she have said?



Just follow the signs....

It is at the end of the hallway...

I don't have time right now...could you go back to the lobby and a volunteer can help you?....

Instead, she took time, probably no more than five minutes and showed the way. And then, when at the door to Nursing Administration she said..."Here you are...is there anything else I can help you with?"

I should have taken this person's name so she could be cloned. I don't know her position or background or anything else about her.

But what she did is leadership at its best. As John Maxwell says, "*Leadership is not about titles, position or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.*"

Second backstory:

I am currently working at a rural hospital doing some coaching. There are some new regulations in place that require documents and other details.



I was emailing back and forth with a person in the Talent Management department just last Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. Many times such situations can go into "that is the way it is and please don't ask questions" mode pretty fast.

Instead, when I asked a question regarding immunizations, the second magic leadership phrase was spoken:

"I don't know the answer to that question. Let me find out for you."

Other things she could have said:

That is our policy. Send over what has been requested.

That is not something our department handles, you will have to call them.

And this morning, before noon, I had the answer on my email.

It might appear that these are merely customer service lines. However, as servant leaders, they are foundational to the thinking that moves and inspires people.



"Let me show you where you need to go"...

"Here you are...is there anything else I can help you with?"

"I don't know the answer to that question. Let me find out for you."

Pretty simple. And so rare.





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