

Are you leading by example?

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“Practice what you preach.” It’s a statement that applies to management as much as it does to parenting. Nobody likes the boss who tells everyone to work late, but then leaves at five. Employees resent the supervisor who says people need to work harder but is always playing solitaire on the computer. Promoting a double standard is a great way to demotivate your staff. As a manager, you have the chance to lead your staff. And few things inspire others to follow someone as much as leading by action.

Being a role model

Managers aren’t necessarily leaders. Managers are promoted into positions of authority. And this authority gives them oversight and responsibility. But leaders, on the other hand, are appointed by their followers. You have to earn the role of leader through your actions and integrity. To be a leader, you have to show others the way by first doing it yourself.

The world’s greatest leaders changed others through their actions. Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, spent most of his adult life living his beliefs. He showed his commitment through his behavior. And people followed in his footsteps. When you lead by example, you make it easy for others to follow you.

How to be a good example

In order to be a good role model, you have to take a close look at your behavior. What do you criticize others for that you do yourself? If you tell your team that work-life balance is important but you work all the time, you’re sending a mixed message. Your staff may be confused about your expectations. Here are some steps to consider:

Look in the mirror. Don’t ask others to do something you’re not willing to do yourself.

Play fair. If you implement new rules, follow them closely.

Get your hands dirty. Working alongside your team builds trust.

Take responsibility. When mistakes happen, own your part.

The best leaders aren’t perfect. They make mistakes and experience failure. But by responding to mistakes with integrity, these managers role model how failure can be an opportunity to learn and improve. Because at the end of the day, your staff will remember what you did, not what you said.