

Leadership Commandment 3: [Communicate with Care and Conviction](#)

Communication is the most important tool in your leadership toolbox. It determines how people perceive you and how they respond to you. Your success as a leader will be determined by the degree to which you follow the third commandment of leadership:

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What job-related activity do leaders engage in the most? COMMUNICATION! What job-related activity do leaders typically pay the least attention to? SAME ANSWER!

Fact is, you don't engage in communication – you rely on it. It's what you use to inform, instruct, direct, develop, motivate, convince, correct, collaborate, and achieve; it's how you affect performance, build trust, and shape a productive environment.

To be an effective leader, you must be an effective communicator. That means paying careful attention to...**What you say** – the words you use and information you include. **How you say it** – your tone, style, and delivery medium. And then checking...**What others hear** – the messages they receive. **How others react** – what they think, feel, and do in response.

A few strategies to help you maximize the impact and effectiveness of your communication activities:

- **Start with the end in mind.** Effective communication is the product of thinking and planning...of knowing where you're headed and then mapping out the best route to get there. It's an outcome rather than an activity. Deal with it accordingly!
- **Focus on quality, not quantity.** Many leaders mistakenly assume that the way to improve communication effectiveness is to just do more of it. You need to provide clear and informative messages that people can understand, accept, and hopefully support.
- **Listen with care.** The key is remembering that the goal of listening is UNDERSTANDING – "I want to hear what you have to say"..."I want to know what you are thinking and feeling"..."I want to learn what the world looks like through your eyes." You don't have to agree with a person's position in order to understand where they're coming from and why they feel as they do.
- **Keep it honest and real.** Avoid the communication extremes of over dramatization and sugarcoating. Your team members are adults who can handle facts without embellishment.

Take Away...to Remember

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