



LIBBY WAGNER
Professional Leadership Results, Inc.

Helping you align your people with your vision



Lead and Get Out of the Way:

Five NotRocketScience Principles for Leadership Effectiveness

By Libby Wagner, Founder of Professional Leadership Results

I think it's always a good idea to start on principle. It helps us develop a shared vision or common ground. Where, oh, where are we coming from when we talk about leading AND getting out of the way? The following five principles for leadership are those that I see evident in effective leaders. They can create a foundation for that tricky balance between holding people accountable and demonstrating respect. They can help you begin to create long-term commitment instead of short-term compliance.

NRS Principle 1: Lead Yourself First. Boy, she wasn't kidding when she said 'not rocket science', was she? Nope. But just because you know that you should lead yourself first, doesn't mean you're doing it. Many of us are not. Many of us are leading others, but we aren't leading ourselves first—we don't know where we're going or where we want to go. We haven't gotten clear about what is essential and what is just nice-to-know. Plus, if the people you are trying to lead get the sense that you haven't been able to lead yourself or you have no idea why or how you got where you are, they'll find someone else to follow—plain and simple—even if they don't leave our organizations or companies. That's not good—then they're still around and not coming along with you. They're sabotaging or back-stabbing or just misbehaving in general.

NRS Principle 2: Ask For What You Want. How much trouble can we get ourselves into by expecting someone else to read our minds? Lots. Typically, we cause ourselves pain by having this expectation in personal relationships, but there is a tremendous loss of productivity,

profit, sales, loyalty and morale when we do not get clear about what we want and then follow up by asking for it! Why do we make people guess? Even the best person will try to decipher our wishes, try to read our minds and come up with some crazy answer we didn't want—then nobody's happy—you didn't get what you wanted and they didn't get to be excellent. It's a lose-lose.

NRS Principle 3: Be Specific. Everyone who knows me is saying, "I knew she'd say that." These are the people who used to be my writing students, those who are currently my clients, and others who enjoy reading my newsletter GIFTs. *Be specific. Be specific. Be specific.* This principle is a close cousin to Principle 2 because when you ask for what you want, you cannot be vague. Well, you can, but then what are your chances for actually *getting* what you want? My sister Karen used to send us a detailed Christmas list every year. I argued with her about this on more than one occasion. "I think you're missing the *point*," I'd say. "No," she said, "you are. If people are going to buy for me anyway, why not be specific and then there's less waste? I'll get things I want and you won't waste your money on something I don't want?" Hmmm. Good point. Be specific.

NRS Principle 4: Close Your Mouth and Listen. Now, I know that some people don't have any trouble with this principle and practice. Most of us, however, have lots of trouble and those of us fabulous extraverts have even more than lots of trouble. (*You know who you are!*) Listening is not time for planning what you're going to say next. Listening is not mere head-nodding, waiting for them to take a breath so that you can interject. Listening is about connecting. Deep listening is empathic and feels like a shot of straight oxygen to the person being heard. This investment of time can deescalate arguments, create a foundation of trust, and build important relationships. Or, you could just make sure that you get to say what you need to say, the other person be damned.

NRS Principle 5: Move Over. Whether you're leading yourself or leading others, there is a time to make room for what's to happen next. Sometimes this means you must let go, give up control, or move on. The more time and money you invest in clenching on to something or someone, the more your energy will reside in that same place and you risk either your own growth and development, someone else's, or both. Get out of your own way. Get out of the way of those you are leading, too. ❖

Libby Wagner

www.libbywagner.com | www.influencingoptions.com
6523 California Avenue SW #139 | Seattle, Washington 98136
p 206.906.9203 | f 866.451.5618
e libby@libbywagner.com

www.libbywagner.com