



# Geared for Success

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## The Power of Learning By Doing

As you know, the most powerful learning we experience as leaders comes from discovery, that is we learn by doing. Direct experiences increase our effectiveness as leaders to handle increasingly complex workplace situations. Simulation learning is a unique, condensed method of training that provides insight into working processes in an organization such as communication, innovation, change management, and efficiencies.

Simulation learning amplifies real experiences by guiding in an immersive environment. Participants are asked to step out of their comfort zones to try new behaviors in a risk-free way. Using a team setting, participants are asked to make strategic choices, be decisive and work together to solve problems. Because of its effectiveness, simulation learning has been widely used in the military, aviation field and healthcare industry for years.

### What is Paper Planes?

Paper Planes is a business simulation focusing on teamwork, collaboration, organizational effectiveness, silos, engagement and customer service. It combines real organizational issues with leadership and team challenges. Participants in the simulation are employed by a plane manufacturing company called PPI (Paper Planes Inc). It has won a contract to design a rapid flight aircraft which will be used in intercontinental travel. The company has the opportunity to sell as many planes as they can manufacture that

meet the customer's specified quality standards.

### What Happens During the Simulation?

Participants are assigned roles and responsibilities within the team for creating paper planes that the customer will purchase. The paper planes must be built to fit customer specifications. The simulation is divided into three "runs". Each run



involves production, test and customer interaction. Debrief time is built in to reinforce learning, incorporate redesign and push the participants to think "big picture". Throughout the simulation, participants are challenged to clearly see the impact of goal setting, communication, individual contribution and customer interaction. It is a powerful experience that stays with the participants long after they leave the training room.

### What is the End Result?

Participants come away with many different facets of learning during Paper Planes. Some of which are:

- Develop a greater understanding of team cohesion
- Experience the "how" to adjust culture for goal attainment, customer focus, communication, partnership and collaboration
- Understand the elements of work process redesign and continuous improvement
- Break down silos and build ownership, accountability and team commitment

With simulation learning, leaders can clearly see how their behaviors impact problem solving and decision making. The challenges of simulated learning demonstrate a direct connection to the everyday changing workplace. Leaders fully comprehend how adjusting their mental models is essential to moving teams forward. And, have fun doing so!



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**Tell me, I forget.**

**Show me, I remember.**

**Involve me, I understand.**

Chinese Proverb

## Is Your Open Door Closed?

Being approachable is a strength that great leaders understand and practice. No matter what your role is in the organization, you cannot be fully effective if people are afraid to approach you. On a team, the leader sets the foundation for building relationships, sharing information, allowing ideas to flow and encouraging trust with his/her approachability. When there is approachability, team members voluntarily come forward with issues before they become full-blown crises. They are not hesitant to come forward to have much needed conversations. This fosters an environment of candor and collaboration.

Approachability is about being accessible and fully present. So, what are some ways to boost your approachability? In the article, "Managing Well: 7 Steps to Upgrade Your Approachability", by David Peck, the author shares the following tips:

1. **Acknowledge updates and information given to you by others.** Comments like: "Thank you for that heads up", "I appreciate that update", "I didn't realize that was happening-thank you for letting me know." All encourage additional information to be given to you.
2. **Listen very carefully while people are talking to you.**



Watch your distractions from multi-tasking - checking your phone, looking at your computer, etc. If you look like you do not have time, people will stop coming to you.

3. **Look available.** Get up from your desk and walk around a few times a day. Use this informal time to get to know others and to recognize them for their good work.
4. **Respond in positive ways.** Few people will want to engage with you if everything you say is negative.

5. **Have one-on-one conversations with your people.** Get to know them outside of their work tasks.

6. **Admit to your own mistakes.** Being vulnerable shows the context of your character.

7. **Think about how the person you are talking to needs to be communicated with.** If someone is easily intimidated, think about how to respond appropriately.

Bonus #8-How do you look? What does your body language say about you? Smile more, look people in the eye, speak in a moderate voice tone, look around and not straight ahead. These body language tips speak to enhancing approachability.

## What is the 5 Hour Rule?

Constant learners are committed to the 5 Hour Rule. Everyone from Elon Musk to Bill Gates to Oprah Winfrey use it. It is a meaningful way to invest and better yourself through deliberate learning. So, for one hour a day, five days a week, people practicing the 5 Hour Rule learn, grow, develop and increase knowledge of something new and different to them. The concept is nothing new--throughout Benjamin Franklin's life he consistently invested an hour a day to learning. His time consisted of:

- Waking up early to read and write
- Setting personal growth goals and tracking results
- Creating a club for "like minded aspiring artisans and tradesmen who hoped to improve themselves while they improved their community"

- Turning his ideas into experiments
- Having morning and evening reflection questions

Learning something new causes the brain to build connections between neurons, replacing some that we lose over time. Whereas, repetition puts us on autopilot. Constant learning cultivates a growth mindset, fosters perseverance and resilience. And, novel experiences can give you a rush of the reward chemical dopamine.

The 5 Hour Rule can be the best investment you ever make. So, take up the accordion, learn a new language, read in ways you never have before and feed your curiosity about a variety of topics and see the difference!

Resource: "Why Constant Learners All Embrace the 5-Hour Rule", by Michael Simmons

**"The purpose of life is to discover your gift.  
The meaning of life is to give your gift away."**

David Viscott

## How to Stop Boomerang Delegation

Have you been a victim of boomerang delegation? Here is how it can happen-you delegate work to one of your employees. After a period of time, s/he brings it back to you to complete. So, you are left thinking, "Why didn't I just do this myself in the first place? I am right back where I started." In an article, "One Question that Stops Upward Delegation from Your Team to You", the author John Kramp suggests stopping the cycle with "Why?". In other words, "Why are you bringing this back to me?" It can prompt five different responses:

1. **"I don't know how."** - Ask the following questions to the employee:
  - What have you tried so far?
  - Who else have you contacted for help?
  - What is the specific point in the project that is blocking your progress?

Your job is to point them toward resources. If they say, "I don't know how", simply say, "This is the perfect time to learn." Perhaps it is time to connect them with a more knowledgeable mentor that can help them.

2. **"I don't have time."** - Ask the following questions to the employee:
  - What are the highest priority projects you are working on right now?
  - When are your projects due?
  - What can you rearrange on your schedule?



Note: You may have overloaded this employee. Help him/her decide what needs to be done. You should also affirm that deadlines are tight and that you appreciate his/her efforts.

3. **"I don't want to be wrong."** - Encourage the employee to make the best call possible. Project that you will be happy to be involved in their decision-making process.

4. **"I don't want to work this hard."** - Of course, your employee will not come out and say this. But, they may hem and haw about their workload and compare it to other departments. In the end, you need to simply say, "I know it is a lot. But, it's what we need to do as a team every day. I'm counting on you to do it."

5. **"This is not my job."** - The responses comes in two forms: doing this task requires work below my job description or doing this task requires work above my job description. Either way hear them out and let them know you are counting on them to complete the task by using resources and gaining insights.

Leaders cannot be successful if they do their own work and the work of their team members. It leads to burn out and discontent over work loads. Think carefully about to whom and what you are delegating. Redirect the employee as necessary. But, delegated tasks should not be coming back to you.

## What to Say Instead of "Great Job"

Recognition is one of the most important things leaders can provide to their team members. It is no surprise that praise can help people feel better about the work they are doing, how they are contributing and how much the organization/the boss appreciates their efforts. Here are some possible phrases to use to give employees the praise they deserve:

- "You really made a difference by..."
- "I'm impressed with..."
- "You're doing top quality work on..."
- "You're right on the mark with..."
- "One of the things I enjoy most about working with you is..."
- "We couldn't have done it without you..."
- "I am proud of you for..."

Resource: [Love'em or Lose'em-Getting Good People to Stay-26 Engagement Strategies that Work](#), by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

## 10 Thoughts On Leadership

1. People follow the leader first and the leader's vision second.
2. Trust is the force that connects people to the leaders and his/her vision.
3. Leadership is not just about what you do but what you can inspire, encourage and empower others to do.
4. A leader brings out the best within others by sharing the best within themselves.
5. Just because you're driving the bus doesn't mean you have the right to run people over.
6. Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.
7. Lead with optimism, enthusiasm and positive energy. Guard against pessimism and weed out negativity.
8. Great leaders know they don't have all the answers. Rather they build a team of people who either know the answers or will find them.
9. Leaders inspire and teach people to focus on solutions, not complaints.
10. Great leaders know that success is a process not a destination.

Resource: "Positive Strategies to Fuel Your Life and Career", by Jon Gordon

**"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."**

John Quincy Adams

## Stop the Block – Using Empathy Effectively

Empathy is often associated with great communicators, successful leaders and outstanding team builders. It is an essential skill for the "people side" of leading and managing. Yet, in our daily busy lives at work, we can easily forget to use this skill. Not using it, can have consequences that impact our ability to build trust, demonstrate our integrity and connect with people on a deeper level.

Empathy is one of the fifteen competencies of Emotional Intelligence. It is the ability to "tune in" to others, emotionally read people and show interest and concern. Empathy is the capacity to connect with what someone else may think/feel about a situation. Unfortunately, empathy is frequently confused with sympathy, being too nice or making polite statements. Note: empathetic statements typically use the word "you"- "You must be feeling and/or thinking..." , "It seems like you are..."; sympathetic statements begin with "I"- "I am sad to hear.."

Sometimes we use empathy blockers without even realizing

it. In the article, "Avoid these Empathy Blockers", from [www.practicalmanagementskills.com](http://www.practicalmanagementskills.com), the author has identified three types of empathy blockers. They are:

- **Dominating Response** - "This is what I think you should do...", "You are always complaining.", "Look, just get on with it."
- **Avoidance Response** - "Stop worrying over nothing."
- **Judgmental Response** - "I am really surprised you did that.", "I would have handled things this way..."

To stop yourself from blocking empathy first begin with active listening. Reflect back the words and emotions expressed by the other person. Watch for facial expressions. Combine this with good body language and your full attention. If possible, avoid having physical barriers (your desk) in the way of the communication. Remember, empathy is grasping what the person is thinking and feeling. It is a challenging skill since our thoughts and feelings may be very different from the person we are tuning in to hear. However, empathy is a core leadership skill that can help to optimize your relationships with others.

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## You've Changed - How to Get Others to See It

In the past--You've made some mistakes. Perhaps you said some things or did some things at work that others are keenly aware of. But, now time has gone by and you have made significant changes in yourself. Good changes that you are proud of. So, how can you get others to let go of their bad perceptions of you? Here is the hard part--Changing perceptions can be very difficult because they happen slowly over time and tend to stick.

So, how can you get past the label that others have placed on you? In the article, "You Really Can Change Your Reputation at Work", by Carolyn O'Hara, the author suggests the following actions for changing perceptions:

- **Acknowledge the perception and address it.** If you feel you have offended someone, reach out and apologize. If you made a poor impression or did something wrong, own it. Say, "I apologize. It will not happen again." Without addressing the perception, it will continue to

fester and multiply.

- **Reveal the intention you have.** State clearly how you want to be seen differently and that you are committed to growing in this area.
- **Don't get defensive.** Accept the fact that others see situations and people in diverse ways.
- **Go above and beyond.** To change people's perceptions, you have to over deliver. You have to recast yourself as the opposite of how you were portrayed. For example, if you were late for every meeting, get there five minutes early. If you missed an important deadline, deliver ahead of deadlines. Be an overachiever.
- **Ask for future feedback.** Show that you care about your impression by asking for feedback. This will help you monitor your performance as seen by others.
- **Have patience.** Unfortunately, it takes people a long time to change their minds/opinions of others.

Lastly, accept yourself and others. We all make mistakes and missteps. Time is a big healer-even at work.



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