

TOP 10 WAYS TO FAIL AS A TEAM LEADER

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We've probably all seen or experienced examples of poor team leadership. Perhaps you've even personally served under a notoriously bad team leader and secretly wondered whether or not you'd have what it takes to sabotage a team of your own when you got your chance.

Then again maybe the examples you've encountered have set the bar too low for you. Don't lose heart. The formula for failing as a team leader isn't as complicated as you might think. Just follow these simple guidelines:

1. Fill your team with people just like you. Surround yourself with people who think like you do and share similar strengths and weaknesses. Could there be a more ideal team than one made up of multiple versions of you?
2. Ask someone to do a specific job, and then do it yourself. Micromanagement is one of the surest ways to fail as a team leader. The team leader who aims to fail must avoid empowerment at all costs. If you want it done right, you've got to do it yourself.
3. Don't trust anyone. Relying on others is risky. What if they don't come through? If you refuse to trust them from the beginning, you don't give them the opportunity to disappoint you.
4. Look out for #1. All truly catastrophic team leaders have one thing in common: narcissism. When in doubt, ask yourself, "What's best for me and my interests?" Don't underestimate the value of manipulation. It's often the fastest and easiest way to get what you want.
5. Exercise high control. It's difficult to maintain command when power is shared among team members. Remember, you're the team leader and it's your way or the highway.
6. Make sure all ideas originate with you. Good ideas come from the top, not the team. Shared credit is for couples with debt problems. Let there be no mistake about who the top dog is and who deserves the praise for any accomplishment.
7. Foster an atmosphere of paranoia. Nothing puts a better positive filter on incoming information than a renowned fear of your response to bad news. Leading by intimidation is highly underrated.
8. Make sure nobody appears smarter than you are. For the record, nobody has more knowledge or experience than you do. That's why you're in charge, right?
9. Have a closed-door policy. Openness to feedback is a slippery slope. One day you're listening, the next you're on the verge of a teachable spirit. A good rule of thumb is to major on talking and minor on listening.
10. Conserve affirmation. You don't want your team members to become arrogant. Use affirming remarks sparingly. Try to space them out as much as you can. If possible, only tell your people you appreciate them once a year at the Christmas party.

In all seriousness, none of us is exempt from insecurities and shortcomings. Part of being human is living with our imperfections, but when we allow them to go unchecked, they infect our leadership capacity with control, self-absorption, and fear of failure. God has bigger ideas for what could be accomplished through our leadership. Left to our own devices, our leadership will automatically come from a self-centered place. When we begin to look outside ourselves and ask God for opportunities to serve and equip those around us, it's a whole different ballgame.

The goal of every team leader should be to discover and unleash the full potential of each member's God-given abilities, not only for the team's sake but also for the broader life calling of each individual. We're all in this journey together. Remember, you're in a lifelong development process too. Take it one day at a time, and continually look for opportunities to learn new things and stretch yourself. Give yourself the grace to gradually become the team leader God intends you to be.