

Selections from Learning Moments for Evolving Leaders

Discussion Guides

“Create Organizational Clarity”: pg. 5

1. Think about this quote from the Leadership Learning Moment: “There’s a distinct difference between someone reciting a statement and someone living the essence and purpose behind that statement.” What is this difference? How would the behavior of someone who tries to live out the essence of a statement differ from someone who can merely recite it, but doesn’t really believe it?
2. List some of the possible benefits of a team whose members all work to actively live out the mission statement. Try to come up with 5-10 things.
3. Take a moment to think: are there problems within your team that could be solved if each member was more focused on your mission?
4. How can your team improve their organizational clarity? Try to come up with several actionable steps you can take to enable each member to behave and lead in ways that amplify the fundamental concepts behind your mission statement.

“The Three Most Requested Leadership Practices”: pg. 16

1. BEFORE you read this Leadership Learning Moment, write down what you think are the three things people look for most in leaders. Now read it. How did your guesses compare with the actual practices organizations look for in leaders?
2. Leadership is multi-faceted, and no leader naturally possesses every single leadership quality. But a good leader works to absorb those practices which do not come naturally to them. Of the top three practices, which come naturally to you? Which do you need to work on?
3. The last sentence reads “leadership is a job and not an entitlement”. Spend some time thinking about/discussing this statement.
 - a. What is the difference between a job and an entitlement?
 - b. Why is the role of a leader one and not the other?
 - c. Do some leaders act as if they were entitled to lead?
 - d. Is this ever a good thing?

Selections from Learning Moments for Evolving Leaders

Discussion Guides

“Where Does the Boss Spend His Time?”: pg. 23-24

1. How does a leader discern what information can be shared and what must be kept secret? Are there any guidelines?
2. Are you quick to judge how much or how little a boss or peer is investing in the organization? Is this particular situation one where you should take the advice on page 24 and simply “...accept and believe in [that boss or peer] as you’d like your team and employees to accept and believe in you”?
3. Is this issue one that your team struggles with? How can you help enable your team to free themselves from judgment and understand that there may be more under the surface than they realize?
4. What are some pros and cons of this perspective?

“Own Your Week”: pg. 31-32

1. “I adjusted my perspective from seeing time as a critical asset, depleting every second, to a perspective of time being a tremendous investment opportunity, awaiting my direction.”
If you were to adopt this new perspective, how would it reshape the way you use your time?
2. The author gives an example of how he has organized his time according to certain themes. Take a moment to block out your week, and your days, so that you can devote your time to the themes you really want.
3. According to this Leadership Learning Moment, scheduling out themes for your time does more than just allow you to prioritize your minutes. It also “motivates your brain muscles to re-sync with your priorities”. Restate this phrase in your own words, then spend some time thinking about/discussing it.
 - a. Does sketching your themes for each day/week make it easier to focus on each one? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you think this approach will make it easier to prioritize exceptions to your themes? In other words, will it help you decide when to say “yes” and when to say “no”?

Selections from Learning Moments for Evolving Leaders

Discussion Guides

“New Take on Tracking Employee Progress” pg. 42

1. What tools or methods, if any, are you using to track employee progress?
2. Have you experienced or observed any issues in your team or in other teams that could be traced back to poor management of data regarding an employee’s trend line?
3. The first sentence of the final paragraph reads, “...leaders too often look back at performance over too short a period of time, losing the perspective of ‘the trend’ of performance, either up or down”. How would a better system of data collection improve your ability to see the full trend line?
4. Take a moment and brainstorm for new, improved ways you can track employee progress. Explore different tools and methods: Evernote is just one option out of many!

“Surround Yourself with Positive Leaders” pg. 60

1. What are your thoughts on the influence a positive attitude can have on your day? Did reading this Leadership Learning Moment change them in any way?
2. Re-read the two perspectives on leadership. Think about/discuss which category you and others would put you in. Are you in the first one? The second? Or maybe somewhere in between? Is this where you would like to be?
3. Who in your workplace could be a positive influence on you? Who could you be a positive influence on?
4. Discuss/think about this:
Sometimes, during especially stressful or busy time at work, it can be hard to keep a positive outlook. Mark Twain once said, “The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up”. Do you think he may have a point? By working to instill a positive outlook in those around you, can you actually *create* the positive team by which you want to be surrounded? How could you change your behavior in the workplace to do this?

Selections from Learning Moments for Evolving Leaders

Discussion Guides

“Have Heart” pg. 75

1. Are you, as a leader, finding it heart to have passion and heart for your tasks? Why is this?
2. If you're feeling burned out, maybe re-organizing your priorities and creating a definite schedule to structure those priorities will help. What are some other ways you can re-kindle your passion for your work?
3. How about the members on your team? Does it seem like some of them maybe lack the heart that would inspire them toward success?
4. What are some actions you as a leader can take to inspire your employees? Make a list, and put it somewhere you'll see it and be reminded regularly to take action.

“Worst Cooks in Your Organization” pg. 77

1. Is the atmosphere of your team one where people readily acknowledge their weaknesses as well as their strengths? Why (or why not) do you think this is the case?
2. What could you do to make your workplace one where the acknowledgement of weakness is met, not with criticism and judgment, but with understanding, assistance, and growth?
3. Why does it matter if people are open with their weaknesses or not? What happens in a situation where no one admits that a lack of knowledge exists?
4. This Leadership Learning Moment presents two visualizations. In the first, a room full of leaders admits that they don't have all the knowledge they need. In the second, leaders are excelling, employees are energized, and the overall culture is one of growth. Think about/ discuss these two scenarios. Are they really just two perspectives of the same thing?

Selections from Learning Moments for Evolving Leaders

Discussion Guides

“Seeking Authentic Leadership” pg. 83

1. Do you agree with the idea presented in this Leadership Learning Moment? Is there a “higher standard” that goes beyond the books to which leaders should hold themselves? Why or why not?
2. If a leader is producing results, does it really matter what the motivation is? What are some issues that might arise if a leader is leading selfishly, rather than authentically?
3. Think about/discuss this quote: “We teach managers to become leaders through adaptation of behaviors and development of key skills. But authenticity is difficult, if not impossible, to teach.” Why is this?
4. Take a moment and review your own leadership using the guidelines found in the last paragraph. Are you an authentic leader? What are some ways that you can grow to be even more so?

“Climbing the Communication Stairway” pg. 90

1. Do you ever feel that sometimes, team members are filtering rather than listening to what you say to them?
2. What about the reverse? If an employee comes to you with something, do you always give them your full attention? Or do you find it difficult to disengage from other tasks/thoughts?
3. Re-read the last sentence of this Leadership Learning Moment. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Are there some levels of listening that should always be avoided?
4. Do you struggle with listening at a particular level? If so, which one? Why is this difficult for you?