

Champions Lead through Facilitated Introspection

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All great leaders know that the most effective form of learning is self-discovery. World-class coaches and managers believe in facilitating the introspective process, which helps people rediscover what they already know. Instead of leadership through the outdated command-and-control, do-it-or-you're-fired model, progressive managers are constantly asking their employees questions and taking careful note of their answers. The great ones know that most people are unaware of what makes them tick in terms of their emotional motivators. The only way to help a person discover the hidden power locked up in their psyche is by asking probing questions.

Learning occurs at two levels during this introspective process.

The first level is when the person digging down inside himself becomes aware of the emotions driving his behavior, and the second is the manager's awareness as it relates to which buttons to push when it's time to motivate his charge to action. Amateur coaches and managers coach primarily through logic. Professional coaches and managers coach primarily through emotion. Since human beings are primarily emotional creatures, it's obvious which method has the most power.

Facilitating the introspective process in another person requires patience and time, and the great ones are willing to invest. The amateur wants instant results, but pros know this rarely occurs. The payoff for the pro comes not only in the form of increased productivity, but also in the connection created between manager and employee. Once an emotional creature is convinced that you care about what she thinks and how she feels, it sets the stage for emotional bonding to occur. Managers and leaders who lead this way lose very few of their people to rival companies because of this bond. In the age of the mind, facilitated introspection is the core process of leadership.

Action Step for Today:

Invest 20 minutes today leading someone through the introspective process.

Your first question should be:

"Tell me what you really want out of life more than anything else."

Your goal should be to make the person comfortable enough to answer you in terms of how she feels, rather than how she thinks.

Once she begins to explain her feelings, follow up with these questions:

What exactly do you mean by that?

What does that look like?

Why do you feel that way?

Tell me more about that.

Why is that important to you?

What does having that mean to you?