



We live in a world where the pace of change is staggering. Companies form and disband in short periods of time. Technology has not only changed the way we do business, but in some ways it has changed us. The workforce has also changed; it isn't motivated by the same things that motivated the previous generation that is now retiring. Yet a common thread that connects great leaders from any generation is they knew how to inspire others.

Jeremy Kingsley, professional speaker, author and president of OneLife Leadership, believes the key to being a great leader is inspiration. People inspired to greatness produce results. To underscore his point, Kingsley quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." Leaders fueled by passion inspire others in a contagious manner.

Kingsley's latest book, *Inspired People Produce Results*, identifies eight characteristics of a great leader who inspires others. While the book is not aimed at Christian audiences, its principles are valid and applicable for the church, as well as for the secular marketplace:

## **PASSION**

This is an essential component of inspiration, igniting both the leader and others. Getting results from people is about more than trying to maximize company profits. It is about maximizing the development of each employee's potential. Less than half of over 7,000 workers in America reported that they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with their job. Less than a third said they were passionate about their jobs or believed that their employer inspired them to be and do their best. In order to increase your effectiveness as a leader, release your own passion. Let it express itself through your senses and emotions. As others experience your passion, their passion will increase.

Kingsley tells the story of Kahler Slater, a small architectural company that redefined its business vision to incorporate employee's passion. The result was greater buy-in from staff and an increase in business.

## **PURPOSE**

This is critical for any business or organization because it can motivate people when the pressure is on. If it is lacking, there are destructive repercussions. We often think purpose is about putting a mission statement on the wall and reading it periodically. Actually, the purpose must become part of the culture of the organization and influence decisions and behavior in order to have impact. Leaders must convey purpose in a way that brings it alive in the hearts of others.

## **LOYALTY**

Loyalty develops in people who believe their leader is committed to their well-being. It also inspires people to put the interests of others before their own. This trait is absent from a lot of organizations and companies today. One author reports that less than a third of U.S. employees are loyal to their companies. That means two-thirds are thinking about leaving and may just be waiting for the first opportunity to do so. Explorer Ernest Shackleton modeled loyalty in a way that inspired incredible commitment from his team. He believed that the loyalty of those who followed you (or worked for you) was "a sacred trust...that must never be betrayed". Do you cultivate loyalty from those who work for you or follow you?

## **CARING**

In a caring environment, people are free to be and do their best. Kingsley explains that this includes appropriately caring about staff members and evidencing an interest in them as human beings. That can be as simple as seeking to create a physical environment that considers a worker's comfort and effectiveness. It can also involve valuing workers for who they are, as well as the contributions they make. Younger workers value appreciation as much as a pay bonus. Great leaders find ways to show they care about their people.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

This includes leaders taking the time to get to know other people and actively listening to them. Leaders sometimes misunderstand how important the relational aspect of leading is. Leading is not just telling people what to do or simply providing directives. It also includes trying to understand your team members needs and dreams, as well as helping them grow as people and develop as employees. You may not like everyone you lead. However, if you can disarm your ego, then you can earn their trust and foster an environment that truly values people.

## **PATIENCE**

Since company executives and leaders move faster than the people they lead, extending *patience* is a must. When employees fall short of the leader's expectations, the temptation is to scream, "What were you thinking?" Losing your cool won't earn you the respect of others. If you want the people who follow you to excel and think outside the box, then you've got to allow room for failure and be patient when they do. As Arnold Glasgow reminds us, "You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not smashing it."

## **COMMUNICATION**

Leadership hinges on being able to communicate effectively. So before you speak to people who follow you, think through what you want to say and how you want to say it. So many people today take the easy road to communication and simply send an email. Often it is far more effective to put a human face on the message. Face-to-face communication also lets us measure how much detail each person needs in order to be informed and engaged. By all means don't be afraid to repeat the message again and again by being deliberately redundant.

## **INTEGRITY**

This characteristic is far more important at the corporate level than most people realize. Norman Schwarzkopf understood it, saying, "Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy." Integrity is always important, but it is especially critical during a company or organization's worst moments. Steelcase is an office furniture company that designed surfaces to be exchangeable between office cubicles and floor-to-wall ceilings. The president of the company, Jim Hackett, discovered that the new line of products it was selling was not up to some fire standards, but it wasn't likely that anyone would discover it. His integrity required that he replace all panels to meet the strictest fire codes. The cost was \$40 million. When American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon on 9/11, the damage would have been much worse if Hackett had not been a man of integrity.

Inspiration is not just about stirring people's emotions. It comes from building a life on certain fundamental qualities. Inspiration is a by-product. So don't set out to merely inspire others. Determine to build your life on foundational characteristics that can hold you up even when life struggles. Then you can truly inspire others to be and do their best.

### ***Inspired People Produce Results***

by Jeremy Kingsley

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