



## Leadership Development – It is all about growing people

If you are planning for a season, grow rice. If you are planning for a decade, grow trees. If you are planning for centuries, grow people. This saying is credited to a Chinese proverb though someone in my class once challenged it as his grandpa's saying. Whatever the source, the truth of this saying should not be lost on anyone privileged to be in the position to groom future leaders or who herself is a potential leader.

Growing or developing people is no rocket science. The key to doing it effectively is to catch people doing something right, reinforce it by rewarding it in and within the budget. You would probably agree with me that for most of our DNA is wired to something wrong. It is not your fault. It is how we were raised. We see it every day being demonstrated not seen the traffic officer ignorantly drive into a directional sign? It is even have been deliberately removed to cause people to sin.



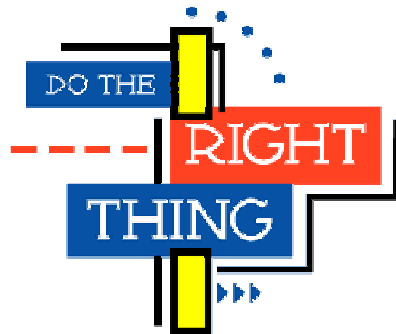
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How do we catch people doing something right? I have over the years taught and practised *Management By Waka-About – MBWA*. Leadership at whatever situation and level – family, community, organisations – micro, small, medium or large, political, social or religious must cultivate the good habit of a deliberate weekly wandering around their base with the aim of catching people doing things right.

There is a necessity, an urgent need to unlearn the theory X mindset which stigmatises human beings as always wanting to do evil and incapable of self starting ever asking can anything good come out of Nazareth?

A basic truism is you get to see what you are looking out for. When people are caught doing the right things, what next do we do in this growth process? First, know that the behaviour that gets rewarded gets repeated. Next, reward and reinforce good behaviours. If not, the good behaviour would not be repeated and the bad ones would hold sway. When a good performance is commended and that quickly, it is in the nature of humans to want to continue such behaviour.

One other frequently overlooked powerful force in this developmental process is the



power of a feedback. Rick Tate said feedback is the breakfast of champions. You may have observed in big athletics meetings how a high jumper goes over to his or her trainer in the stand for some pep talk and feedback before making another attempt. Someone said feedback is the most cost-effective strategy for improving performance and instilling satisfaction, and it can turn people around fast. Make feedback quick

and immediate either good or bad. Do not wait until the almighty appraisal period and do not keep a 'black book' of offences and shortcomings. While providing feedback dwell on strengths most of the time, using the CRC principle of commend, recommend and commend.

At every turn and opportunity, instil the pride of self esteem in your future leaders and high potentials. It was the late MKO Abiola who said no one shaves your head in your absence. This is corroborated by Eleanor Roosevelt's 'no one can make you feel inferior without your permission'. They need to hear it that people who feel good about themselves produce great results. Self esteem does not mean there are no areas you still need to work on in your life it is just that at your very core, you are solid and that your self esteem is not negotiable. Self esteem has two interrelated practical components. The first is self efficacy, self confidence – this is a sense of basic confidence no matter what. The other is self respect – a sense of being worthy of happiness.

Let me hasten to mention here that part of my own development was to be quickly reminded that success is not forever and failure is not fatal. I'm forever indebted to those teachers and managers who prepared me early. As a management trainee and Personnel Officer in BAGCO, I was quickly groomed to take over the industrial relations portfolio for the workers Union. When we have good joint consultative meetings, he urged me to be focused and prepare for the next meeting which may be hotter. When errors are made

he stood by me and encouraged me often not to take it personal. He is a grower of people, no wonder he seats at the helm of affairs in the same company as CEO today.

A very successful American football coach was said to have a twenty-four-hour rule to manage either winning or defeat. Everybody in his team has twenty hours either to celebrate a win or bemoan a defeat as deeply as possible. At the expiration of this period, it becomes history and everyone is ready to focus on the next opponent. Keep things in perspective – do not get too high when you win or too low when you don't.

The entire process of development is a learning curve because when you stop learning, you stop growing and start to decay. Learning and leadership excellence are interwoven. Change is constant. Organisations are forever evolving so it is wise to make continuous learning your top priority and constantly strive to adapt to new demands on your time, space and energy.

For instance, we recently placed a job advert in a couple of national dailies and on the internet. One of the requirements was a 'learner leader'. I got a couple of calls, one from a student of mine and the other from a very humble Ph.D holder friend I have great respect for wanting to know exactly what or who a 'learner leader' is. It is straight forward. Leadership skills are learnable. There are far too few born leaders, if any at all. Hence a performing leader is a learning one. In Bezaleel Consulting, the organisation I work for we are so pleased to dedicate a large percentage of our resources – money, man, machine, moment, merchandise, muscles, etc to growing people.



Till next week, think more on positively impacting a life in the best way you can. Enjoy.

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